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Allegiances

[image]

RiverClan
Leader: Icestar- light gray tabby she-cat with blue eyes

Deputy: Grasspelt- light brown tom

Medicine Cat: Beechleaf- speckled brown and gray she-cat

Warriors:
Icewing- white she-cat with blue eyes
Pebblefoot- mottled gray tom
Mallownose- light brown tabby tom
Robinwing- tortoiseshell and white tom
Apprentice, Flickerpaw
Petalfur- gray and white she-cat
Ashenfang- black she-cat with green eyes
Graybrook- gray and white long-furred tom
Hollowfern- dark brown tabby tom
Troutjump- pale gray tabby she-cat
Mossylight- brown and white she-cat
Rushrunner- light brown tabby tom
Cedarbrook- brown and gray she-cat
Toadstrike- mottled brown tom
Brighttail- cream and white she-cat
Cougarheart- light brown tabby tom

Apprentices:
Flickerpaw- brown and black spotted tom

Queens:
Duskfur- brown tabby she-cat
Acornstream- golden brown she-cat, nursing Robinwing's kits (Goldenkit- pale orange tabby tom with white from nose to belly, and Thawkit- mostly white calico she-cat with a brown spot across face)

Elders:
Graymist- pale gray tabby she-cat
Mintfur- light gray tabby tom

ThunderClan
Leader: Whitestar- white she-cat with green eyes

Deputy: Cloudtail- longhaired white tom with blue eyes

Medicine Cat: Seedlight- very pale ginger she-cat

Warriors:
Brackenfur- golden brown tabby tom
Brightheart- white she-cat with ginger patches
Apprentice, Snowpaw
Spiderleg- long limbed black tom with brown underbelly
Hazeltail- small gray and white she-cat
Apprentice, Poppypaw
Mousewhisker- gray and white tom
Lionblaze- golden brown tabby tom with amber eyes
Foxleap- reddish tabby tom
Rosepetal- dark cream she-cat
Blossomfall- tortoiseshell and white she-cat
Hollyleaf- black she cat with green eyes
Lilyslip- dark tabby she-cat with white patches

Apprentices:
Poppypaw- tortoiseshell she-cat
Snowpaw- pure white tom

Queens:
Daisy- cream long-furred cat from the horseplace
Cinderheart- gray tabby she-cat, expecting Lionblaze's kits
Dovewing- pale grey she-cat with blue eyes, nursing Bumblestripe's kits (Bluekit- bluish grey tom, and Cloudkit- gray tabby she-cat with white underbelly)

Elders:
Graystripe- long haired gray tom
Millie- gray tabby she-cat with blue eyes

ShadowClan
Leader: Tawnystar- tortoiseshell she-cat with green eyes

Deputy: Owlclaw- light brown tabby tom

Medicine Cat: Antstep- small black tom with white forepaws

Warriors:
Snowbird- pure white she-cat
Olivenose- tortoiseshell she-cat
Apprentice, Patchpaw
Scorchfur- dark grey tom
Tigerheart- dark brown tabby tom
Dawnpelt- cream furred she-cat
Pinenose- black she-cat
Apprentice, Sedgepaw
Starlingwing- ginger tom
Elmwhisker- brown and black tabby tom
Apprentice, Webpaw
Pinenose- ginger tabby she-cat
Darkthroat- black tom with white tail
Martinheart- black and white tom

Apprentices:
Patchpaw- calico tom
Sedgepaw- brown tabby she-cat
Webpaw- pale grey she-cat

Elders:
Oakfur- small brown tom
Toadfoot- dark brown tom
Crowfrost- black and white tom

WindClan
Leader: Emberstar- gray tom with two dark paws

Deputy: Sunstrike- tortoiseshell she-cat with large white mark on her forehead

Medicine Cat: Whiskerpelt- long furred light brown tom

Warriors:
Gorsetail- very pale gray and white tom with blue eyes
Harespring- brown and white tom
Apprentice, Applepaw
Stonefoot- white she-cat with grey paws
Apprentice, Flarepaw
Breezepelt- black tom with amber eyes
Swallowtail- dark grey she-cat
Whiskerbreath- light brown tom
Apprentice, Quailpaw
Furzenose- grey and white she-cat
Boulderstrike- large pale grey tom

Apprentices:
Applepaw- ginger tom
Flarepaw- ginger and white tabby she-cat
Quailpaw- brown tabby she-cat

Queens:
Sedgewhisker- light brown tabby she-cat
Heathertail- light brown tabby she-cat with blue eyes, nursing Emberstar's kits (Robinkit- brownish red tom and Greykit- grey tabby tom)

Elders:
Owlwhisker- light brown tabby tom
Whitetail- small white she-cat
Nightcloud- black she-cat

Prologue

WindClan and RiverClan's border was quiet. Nothing seemed to disturb the cold, evening leaf-bare air except for the wind and prey. Yet, ten WindClan cats crouched facing the RiverClan border, ready to spring at their leader's signal.

"We will show RiverClan that they cannot steal from us! Are you ready to fight?!" a gray tom with two dark paws spoke to his warriors in a encouraging whisper.

"Are you sure we brought enough cats, Emberstar? RiverClan has their whole clan!" spoke up a young she-cat with an odd white mark on her forehead.

"If we get low, *you* can run back to WindClan and get more cats!" spat Emberstar, annoyed. The she-cat looked slightly nervous. The leader gave one more encouraging smile, and the ten sprinted into rival territory.

Chapter 1.

**For you old readers : here is another chapter to add to your favorite book !!! * laughs hilariously * * snorts from laughing too much *

For you new readers: Hello ! Welcome to this book! I hope you enjoy !

Haha anyway , this is the other chapter I mentioned adding to make it a little longer and add more to the characters of Minnowstar and Willowshine before they * SPOILER ALERT FOR NEW READERS *

Die . It was really weird writing " Icefrost " again instead of " Icestar ," since I'm now used to the latter . I messed up so many times XD if you notice one that says " Icestar ," please let me know ! Anyway, I hope you like it ! Enjoy !!

END SPOILER ALERT

-Emrysstar :3**

_____

The late afternoon sun reflected off the stream and struck Icefrost, the deputy of RiverClan, right in the eye. She had been about to scoop up a fish between her paws for the Clan, when the light blinded her. Hissing in displeasure, the young cat squirmed backwards a few steps. Her apprentice, Toadpaw, had been sitting close by, and looked up with a slightly concerned expression.

"Did the fish splash you in the eye?" Toadpaw asked, tilting his head.

Icefrost, shook her head. "No, just the sun..."

"The sun splashed you?" Toadpaw mewed, even more confused.

"No!" Icefrost replied, laughing. "The sunlight reflected into my eye

from the river." She glanced at the meager pile of fish in between the two cats, most of which Toadpaw had caught. "We should probably head back to camp. Good work. You'll make a fine warrior soon."

The deputy and apprentice set off at a quick trot back to the RiverClan camp, carrying the fish in their mouths. As soon as they stepped through a layer of small trees, they appeared again into a clearing, surrounded by walls of brambles, rushes and other vegetation. This was the camp where RiverClan lived. They ate here, slept here, gathered here, relaxed here- most of the daily necessities except for hunting and border patrol, which occurred all over their territory. The leader, Minnowstar, made sure everything ran smoothly, with the help of Icefrost, as deputy, and senior warriors. Being promoted to the deputy position only a moon before, Icefrost still had much to learn about leading her Clan. The previous deputy, Cloudleap, had been a seasoned warrior, and died in a valiant fight against a hawk. Icefrost sometimes worried that she would never be as brave or as respected as Cloudleap. But these attributes would take time to acquire, of which she had plenty.

Now, the deputy placed her catch on the fresh kill pile, which the warriors and apprentices supplied for the Clan to share. Toadpaw set his beside hers. At that moment, Minnowstar padded by while talking to Icewing, and glanced at Toadpaw's catch.

She nodded in congratulations. "Great job, Toadpaw! You're helping the Clan very much in this time of need." Toadpaw turned his head down, shy from the attention, but mumbled a thanks.

Since almost a moon ago, RiverClan had been hunting a smaller amount of prey than usual for coming out of leaf-bare. Clan life became harder, as they did not have enough food to give all cats. WindClan, a neighboring Clan, seemed to be having the same problem, and blamed RiverClan for stealing their prey. WindClan thought that if RiverClan was having a shortage, it would be natural for RiverClan to steal a little to support themselves. Of course, RiverClan wasn't stealing. They were honest and had morals. If they needed more food, they would ask.

Minnowstar continued. "Would you mind taking a few mice to the

elders while you're here?" she asked Toadpaw kindly. "And where's your sister, Brightpaw? Maybe you could get her to take some food to Willowshine and Beechpaw? They've been hard at work restocking after leafbare."

"I think she is out training with Grasspelt," Toadpaw replied, remembering seeing his sister head out of camp with her mentor.

The leader frowned. "Oh, well, nevermind. She's doing something useful, and wouldn't want to interrupt. Anyways, maybe I'll-"

"I can do it, Minnowstar. I don't mind. I would like to see them, anyways," Icefrost spoke up, happy to have an excuse to visit the medicine den.

Toadpaw padded off in the direction of the elders den, a few pieces of fresh kill dangling from his mouth, while Minnowstar looked at Icefrost gratefully. "Really? Oh, thank you! Robinwing asked me to assess Flickerpaw on his fighting technique and I was really hoping to do that before sundown. Thank you!" Minnowstar called as she hurried away.

Icefrost picked up a fish from the fresh kill pile and padded over to the medicine den. She had spent almost a moon in there when she dislocated a paw as an apprentice. As a result, she grew close to Willowshine, the RiverClan medicine cat. Icefrost, or Ice*paw* at the time, would help with simple duties to occupy herself and make life easier for Willowshine, who didn't have Beechpaw as an apprentice back then.

Icefrost stepped through the foliage covering the den right as Willowshine was about to come out. The two nearly bumped into each other. The medicine cat looked up from the bundle of plant life she held in her mouth to Icefrost and the fish in *her* mouth. "Hello!" Willowshine mewed, the words muffled by the leaves.

"Hello!" Icefrost replied, her words also coming out garbled. They both set their items down and laughed. "I came to bring you this!" the deputy mewed as she signaled to the fish with her tail.

"Great! I was about to take out old herbs, but that can wait. I

probably should eat something." Willowshine picked up the fish to take it to a place to sit and beckoned for Icefrost to follow. They sat down next to each other and Icefrost watched Willowshine dig into the meal.

"How is it being the new deputy? Are you handling it well?" Willowshine asked, licking a piece of fish into her mouth.

Icefrost shrugged. "I think I am. I mean, I really don't know. Is the Clan running smoothly? Is everything getting done that needs to be done?"

It was Willowshine's turn to shrug and shake her head. "I haven't noticed any big difference in Clan life since you became deputy. Having a younger deputy helps the Clan in new times. If anything, you're making the better." She took a bite.

Icestar sighed, relieved. "Thank you, Willowshine. I think needed to hear that."

"Anytime." Willowshine smiled. After a moment of silence, minus the sounds of chewing, the gray tabby stirred. "I guess I better take out those herbs. See you later?" She stood up and stretched slowly.

"Sure," Icefrost mewed. She stood, too, and followed Willowshine to the center of camp.

The medicine cat nodded a farewell, and walked out the entrance of the RiverClan camp. Icefrost watched her go with a sense of gratitude. Willowshine had done so much for her. The deputy glanced around the camp for anything that needed to be done. Seeing nothing, she sat down in the sun to groom. *Might as well take a few moments to myself. You never know when something will happen.*

Hope you liked this new first chapter !!! Sorry it was kind of just an intro/filler, but stuff needed to be done to introduce characters and the story . Adding this actually allows me to have enough chapters to be in the Wattys 2017, so I'm entering ! Wish me luck !

If you are new to this book , please keep reading ! I've gotten a lot of positive feedback , and I hope you will enjoy it too !

- Emrysstar

Chapter 2.

"Ashenfang! Come with me on a sundown hunting patrol, will you? First we need to find Mossylight and Toadpaw." Icefrost called to her sister across the camp.

Ashenfang looked up from licking her paw, her tongue hanging out of her mouth. Icefrost chuckled. When Ashenfang gained composure, the young black she-cat replied,"Sure! I think Mossylight is in the warrior's den."

"Okay, I'll look." Icefrost found Mossylight curled up tightly, and almost didn't want to wake her. But then the deputy remembered that Mossylight really *did* need to come hunt, and sighed, before nudging her awake.

"Go away, Troutjump, I'm trying to sleep!" Mossylight replied to the disturbance, thinking it was her sister.

"It's not Troutjump, and WindClan is attacking!" Icefrost mewed gruffly.

At this Mossylight was instantly awake, and jumped to her paws. "What? Where?!" Icefrost laughed again.

"Just tested to see what would get you up. Now that I know for sure you are loyal to your Clan and awake, let's go on a hunting patrol! Have you seen my apprentice?"

Mossylight huffed. "I haven't seen Toadpaw lately. Last I knew he went out for a evening walk."

Icefrost thought for a moment, reflecting on how Toadpaw, her apprentice, only went for walks to clear his mind. *I wonder if he is doing okay,* she wondered. Then to Mossylight, mewed, "Let's start and see if we catch him while he is out."

The two she-cats squeezed out of the warrior's den, then the deputy

called to Ashenfang to say it was time to go. As Ashenfang hurried over, Icefrost repeated what she planned about Toadpaw. Only after they had caught mice and two fish, did he appear limping drowsily but anxiously down the shore. When he noticed the group and his mentor, he hurried toward them. Now that he was closer, Icefrost could see scratches along his flank and fur missing from his belly.

"What happened to you?!" Icefrost rushed to his aid and started to clean her apprentice like his mother, Petalfur, would.

"WindClan... attack... heading for camp..." Toadpaw panted. He seemed to relax as he collapsed in the presence of clanmates. Mossylight gave Icefrost a look that seemed to say "are you sure you were just waking me?" Icefrost responded with a look of "I thought so."

Chapter 3.

[image]

The cat in the picture is Toadpaw! Also, as you can probably guess, the cat on the cover is Icefrost.

Disclaimer: I am just going to say that I had a lot of help from "Warriors: The Darkest Hour" and some from "Warriors: Omen of the Stars: Eclipse" with the battle details. I did change the story so that I am not copying, of course.

Icefrost sent Mossylight and Ashenfang ahead to help the clan while she helped Toadpaw limp home. Ahead, the fairly new deputy could here the battles cries of cats, and realized that WindClan had already arrived. She wondered how well it would turn out, as it being her first battle as deputy. When at the entrance of the camp, Icefrost had Toadpaw slip around the edges while she slashed at any cat who tried to get him.

"I can take him from here," a voice suddenly mewed. Icefrost turned to see Willowshine and sighed with relief.

"Good, who else has come to your den for treatment?" Icefrost asked.

"Only Mallownose, but he will be fine. His tail got the worst of the damage." the medicine cat reassured.

Icefrost felt better now that she was filled in, and sprung into the fight. A young ginger tom almost immediately pounced on her back, but Icefrost dropped and rolled. It was easy to bat him away, and the light gray tabby guessed it was only an apprentice.

As a break in the fight appeared around Icefrost, she was able to survey the damage. The main entrance would need rebuilding, and so would the warriors den. The RiverClan deputy could see her

father, Robinwing, fearlessly guarding her mother, Acornstream, and the rest of the nursery. He would allow nothing to happen to Acornstream while he was still standing. Graybrook was guarding the elders, and Pebblefoot and Rushrunner had the medicine den. Icewing was rolling on the ground with a black tom, while Flickerpaw and Brightpaw were fighting side by side against all warriors that came after them. Once, Flickerpaw was cornered by a white she-cat and Brightpaw pinned under a light brown tom. Icefrost was about to come and help when Petalfur barreled into the she-cat and kept running until she sprang onto the tom and rolled away with him in a screeching knot of claws and fur, which let the two apprentices get back into their fighting positions.

Icefrost then spotted Cedarbrook, RiverClan's newest warrior, thrashing helplessly under a brown and white tom. "Will this teach you not to steal prey from WindClan?" the cat hissed.

"But we *haven't!* I promise I don't know who it is!" Cedarbrook protested. Her blows were getting weaker each time, and Icefrost sprung towards the two battling cats. She knocked the wind out of the WindClan cat and he knocked into Hollowfern, who had just sent another cat running for the camp entrance.

Cedarbrook let herself half walk and be half dragged by Icefrost, who was leading her to the medicine cat's den entrance. As the young she-cat limped inside, Icefrost heard a hiss and whirled around to come face to face with Sunstrike, the WindClan deputy.

"Still sending cats to hunt in WindClan territory? I thought you would have taken our warning to stay out!" The tortoiseshell she-cat jeered.

"We have never hunted in WindClan territory, and I'd much prefer a nice fish to stringy rabbits any day!" Icefrost retorted. Apparently this was their form of "revenge."

At Icefrost's comment, Sunstrike hissed with rage and pounced. Icefrost nimbly stepped aside and delivered a scratch of her own, but not without receiving a torn ear. Without hesitation, Sunstrike leaped again. Icefrost rolled with the impact, but landed on top of the WindClan deputy, setting one paw on her neck. Sunstrike was

able to wriggle away, and her claws met with flesh as she raked them across Icefrost's shoulder. Pain danced through the RiverClan deputy's body, and she tried not to back down, but leaped forward, sending Sunstrike flying into the brambles of the nursery, momentarily stunning the she-cat. Icefrost managed to bite Sunstrike's foreleg, but not without getting a cut above the eye, sending her jumping back with pain. The she-cats were now circling, daring each other to make the next move. Both's pelts were torn, and Sunstrike's shoulder glistened with blood, while blood was also half blinding Icefrost in one eye.

Sunstrike lashed out a paw, but instead of hitting her enemy, she hit her own clan mate when Troutjump and Whiskerbreath rolled in between the she-cats, not aware that they had disrupted a serious stand-off. Sunstrike cursed under her breath. Icefrost took the chance while *her* enemy was distracted, landing a couple blows to the flank. She also managed to disappear into the crowd, confusing Sunstrike even more.

Two WindClan warriors appeared in front of Icefrost, and she was tackled. Desperately trying to free herself, she was able to push off one, but the other jumped on for reinforcement. Claws scraped at her belly, and she yowled in pain. The only thing she could think of was the oldest trick in the book. Icefrost went limp as if admitting defeat, and the other warrior loosened his grip. She then heaved up sending the tom flying backwards into the first cat that pinned her, and they both fell into a heap. The young tabby then gave each a last scratch to the nose before they scrambled to the camp entrance in flight.

Icefrost gave herself a moment to catch her breath before jumping back into the fight. "Applepaw! Go back to camp and call about four more cats for help!" Emberstar called to an apprentice. Applepaw pushed through the throng of cats in an attempt to follow his leader's orders, but Icefrost had other ideas. She made her way to Applepaw, shoving a dark grey she-cat off of Troutjump on her route, and blocked off the WindClan apprentice from the camp exit.

"I don't think RiverClan would like you to go out and get help, especially since this was your clan's idea!" She batted at the apprentice every time he stepped closer to get help. After the

apprentice had tried three or four times, he backed away from the entrance and dissolved into the mass of fighting cats, so Icefrost started to go after him. Quickly she stopped, thinking it could be a trick. No sooner than this thought cross her mind, that she saw a ginger blur streak out of the far edge of the crowd and through the tunnel, and at this point realized that Applepaw had made it.

Chapter 4.

Hello fellow Wattpadders!!

I am here to inform you that school is starting up again, and I might be a bit slow updating to this book. I know I don't have many readers (in fact I think I know most of them personally), but I thought I would just let you guys out there know what is going on.
My goal is to get AT LEAST one chapter every two weeks, and do more on holiday weekends when there is more time. I think I can meet that, since I am trying to not to over do my work this year to make it more fun and less stressful. Thanks for hopefully understanding in advance.
I also want to give a shout out and thank you to Lucar_Entei **for being my first follower that is someone I don't know personally and is following me most likely because of my books! Thank you** Lucar**! Yay for you!**
-Rustlingstar

"Fox dung!" Icefrost muttered. A good amount of her cats were already weak from hunger, and not at full health. If Applepaw's reinforcements got there soon, RiverClan would be doomed. *We have got to get the current WindClan warriors out of here!* she thought.

"Push them back!" Icefrost called to her clan. She then wriggled through the crowd to get to the side opposite the camp entrance. Along the way, she spotted a she-cat that looked ready to run for home at the next thing that came at her. Icefrost decided to test this theory, and swiped a paw that came with a hiss that *did* send the she-cat running.

Once at the back, Icefrost started sending out flying kicks and claws that would make any cat retreat to avoid, while also trying to control the chaos of her clan. "Mossylight! Let the tom go and come join me in pushing back the rest of WindClan! He looks ready to

leave, good job." Icefrost called to her friend and Mossylight obliged. Together, the two friends drove back warriors with the power of LionClan working with them. The she-cats slowly but steadily stepped forward, paw step after paw step, as more cats joined them until a long line was slowly formed of strong RiverClan warriors that blocked WindClan from the other little-less-than-half of the clearing. Soon, there was less than a quarter of the total space for the enemy clan.

Icefrost looked along the line of cats for Minnowstar to check in, but strangely didn't see her. That is when she saw a flash of dark grey fur inside a close knot of WindClan warriors. *Minnowstar is trapped in there, alone, with only one life!* The thought came to Icefrost like lightning and she remembered the last time in the battle she had glimpsed her leader: blood coming from a cut just below the neck, missing fur, panting, and swaying on her feet. Icefrost knew that Minnowstar was in danger. RiverClan drove WindClan outside of the camp, but Minnowstar had disappeared. Icefrost leaped out of the defensive line and dived into the mass of grey, brown, tan, black, cream, white, and ginger WindClan pelts, searching for her leader and trusted former mentor.

When Icefrost reached the other side of the crowd without spotting Minnowstar, the deputy then saw her leader between the fast paced water of the stream that surrounded the camp and Emberstar. "Go for a nice swim, *RiverClan* cat." he taunted.

"You go... back to... your home... *kittypet*." Minnowstar retorted between gasping breaths. At the last insult Emberstar lashed out an unsheathed claw, and caught Minnowstar square on the nose. The surprise and pain sent her jumping back, right into the rushing water. It made her slip and she was swept downstream until she was able to grab hold of a rock. Her eyes were wide with fright and that was when Icefrost realized her leader was too weak to swim.

"I'm coming, Minnowstar! I won't leave you!" Icefrost bounded along the shore with renewed strength, until she got parallel with Minnowstar. Her heart sank and she felt the tiredness coming back when she tested the water to find it actually quite fast, and wasn't sure if she could swim and carry Minnowstar right after a battle. Icefrost also knew that it was her leader's last life, and if anything

went any more wrong, she might lose it! This whole time, Emberstar stood watching with shock and a little horror that the RiverClan leader could actually die thanks to him. To be an honorable warrior was to fight but not kill.

"No, Icefrost, my time is now. You will make a great leader, in rebuilding our Clan. You know this is my last life," Minnowstar said weakly.

"No! But I am only a new deputy! I need more time to learn! You must live! What do you mean by 'rebuilding?' What else is going to happen?" Icefrost pleaded. She tried one more desperate time to step into the river, but to no avail; the water was too fast for her post-battle weakness.

Minnowstar shook her head. Then, she stared directly past Icefrost's shoulder as if in a trance. The deputy looked behind herself to see an almost-invisible cat with stars in it's fur. *A StarClan cat!* Icefrost thought. *She really is going to die.* Then Minnowstar's gaze fixed on Icefrost and she spoke again. "StarClan told me to tell you that another cat will die today."

Icefrost was not in the mood for more bad news, but the question came out anyways out of natural instinct. "Who?!"

Minnowstar was solemn, and with one final gasping breath, replied, "They did not say." With that, the weak and brave leader let go of the rock that held her last life. Minnowstar was swept downstream, and Icefrost caught one last glimpsed of grey fur before she was carried under the waves.

Chapter 5.

"No! Minnowstar! Come back!" Icefrost called out in grief for her dead leader. Emberstar had silently padded up next to her.

"I-I am s-sorry for what I have done. I did not know she was so weak. I would have been more thoughtful of my actions if I had known she was on her last life. WindClan would never kill unless they had to. Please forgive me." Emberstar said with his head down, while Icefrost stood speechless. "She was a kind and thoughtful leader. I will call off my warriors and leave you to mourn."

"Th-thank you," Icefrost stuttered, and Emberstar walked away and called retreat. Soon, all of the WindClan warriors were gone, although some were reluctant, and left the battling RiverClan cats confused.

Greybrook, Icefrost's brother, came to stand beside her and asked, "Why did Emberstar retreat? He was winning. Are you ok?" The tom asked after noticing how dazed Icefrost looked.

"Minnowstar," Icefrost choked out, "is dead!"

Greybrook gasped. "What happened?!" When his sister didn't answer at first, he realized that she needed some time alone. He let her lean on his shoulder and was going to guide her back to camp, but Icefrost shook him off.

"I'm ok. I need to check on everyone else, though," she reassured her brother. Louder, she called, "Is anyone badly hurt?"

At that moment Willowshine came out of the camp entrance to heal injuries with a mouth full of herbs. She went to go check on a panting Flickerpaw, who looked like he might have trouble walking, while the RiverClan warriors filed into camp to rest from the exhausting battle. Only Willowshine, Flickerpaw, and Icefrost remained outside.

At that moment, cats burst through the trees on the other side of the river. It was the WindClan reinforcements. Apparently, word hadn't gotten to them that the battle was over, as they were confused at seeing only RiverClan. "Go away! The battle is over." Icefrost hissed at them.

Behind her, she heard a rustling in the bushes and breaking twigs, as if something big was approaching. The WindClan cats that were standing in front of her froze in place and crouched, fearfully looking over Icefrost's shoulder. She spun around to see a badger, lumbering out from the edge of the woods. It stared hungrily at Willowshine, who was standing alone, paws planted as if she couldn't move them. Flickerpaw had gone back into camp, but Willowshine had stayed out checking to see if there were any last cats.

"I think I know what actually has been happening to our food," A light brown tom mewed fearfully. The WindClan cats must have gotten some of their fear controlled, because they ran off away from Icefrost and the badger. *It must have smelled the blood from the battle!* she thought. The badger took a step towards Willowshine and swiped out a huge paw, sending the medicine cat flying into a tree. She lay stunned, with a cut in her head, but still breathing.

At this Icefrost ran forward to nip at the badger's huge legs, then ran under it and clawed at it's belly. This confused the badger, for it kept twisting its giant head to try and strike her, but she was always out of reach. Icefrost came out behind it, and slashed at its hind legs. The badger roared with pain, and spun around to give her a blow to the shoulder. The deep scratch stung badly, but Icefrost knew she had to keep fighting.

She leaped up onto the badger's back, and clawed at its ears and fur. The soon-to-be-leader had the advantage now of being out of reach of the giant claws and teeth, but still able to give the badger bites and scratches. It realized this too, so it stumbled over to the tree it threw Willowshine at and smashed itself against it, sending Icefrost tumbling off its back, momentarily stunned. Willowshine tried to scramble out of the way, and succeeded, but only by managing to also back into a thorn bush. In the back of her mind, Icefrost heard an alarming screech of a cat in pain, but couldn't

process it with the blood roaring in her ears.

When she was able to stand, the badger was lumbering off, leaving the medicine cat lying ominously still.

Chapter 6.

Hello everyone! You may be thinking that my story is going to be really gruesome, but it's not. Only the first three chapters. I had to live up to the summary somehow! The rest is going to be more calm. Just saying.

Icefrost's breath caught in her throat. "Willowshine?" she whispered. As she staggered over to the medicine cat, Willowshine eyes fluttered open and moved to Icefrost.

The new leader breathed a huge sigh of relief. "You're alive!"

"Not for much longer. I am the second cat Minnowstar spoke of," Willowshine gasped.

"No! Not you, too! What will we do without a medicine cat and a inexperienced deputy as a leader? I need help!" Icefrost protested.

"You will make a fine leader in rebuilding the Clan." Icefrost was starting to feel like she was the one being swept down the river, and no cat was there to help her. She was flailing her paws around, trying to get a grip on anything, but she would always pull it into the river with her. She could hardly think, her mind spinning because of everything that had happened that day. She could not lose Willowshine. Yet at the same time, she felt as if the medicine cat was slipping away from her, even though her body was right where she had left it. It was her spirit that was leaving. Willowshine's breath was becoming slower and shallower each time, until it was hardly audible. With one more loud gasp, she nuzzled Icefrost. Then she relaxed, and that was her last.

Icefrost buried her face into Willowshine's fur, trying to hold back tears. There was a trace of sweet chervil scent in her pelt, which made the aching feeling inside Icefrost's belly worse. Willowshine had been so much of a friend to Icefrost and the rest of the Clan, it

was hard to imagine life without her. She began to share tongues with Willowshine for the last time, smoothing down her soft grey fur until it was glossy.

In the back of her mind, she heard paw steps coming from the camp entrance. "Icefrost?" It was Acornstream, her mother. "There you are! We've been looking for you- Oh! Willowshine! What happened!?" Acornstream came hurrying over and settled down next to Icefrost.

"It was a badger that stole our prey." Icefrost chocked out between sobs. "It came after the battle and attacked Willowshine. I tried to fend it off but it was useless. It killed her." Acornstream began to sooth Icefrost and mourn the dead medicine cat.

Soon, more cats came out of camp to see what was going on, and gathered around Willowshine's lifeless body. A wail of grief was heard louder than most and Beechpaw ran over and pushed through the crowd of cats to get to her mentor before the body grew colder. *Great StarClan! Both Minnowstar and Willowshine died in one day!* Icefrost thought.

She backed away to let other cats in, and stumbled over to the warrior's den, as she realized just how tired she was. That was when she remembered that she was suppose to name the new deputy before moonhigh. Sighing, she wished she could just crawl into her nest.

Yet, she turned around and staggered over to the base of Highlog, which the leader sits on to make announcements and conduct ceremonies. She made sure to stop at the fresh kill pile to grab a squirrel to eat. She sat down to think a moment before making her important decision. By now, some of the cats had come in from sharing tongues with Willowshine, and were milling around the camp. *Rushrunner is well liked, but he isn't very experienced. Robinwing would be good, but the clan might think I am just choosing family...*

Thoughts like these bounced around in Icefrost's head, until she came up with a good choice. She leaped up the lower part of the log, then scrambled the rest. "Let all cats old enough to catch their own prey join beneath Highlog for a clan meeting," she yowled,

reciting the words that Minnowstar used to mew. The thought brought a pang of pain to her heart at the memory of her dead leader. As the cats came out of their dens, some mumbling about not getting enough sleep, Icefrost shifted her weight, aware of her sore legs protesting against the moonhigh tradition. Once all the cats were seated, the silver tabby began speaking. "As you all have heard, Minnowstar died in the battle. She was too weak to swim, and was swept downstream by the current when she slipped in." At this there were sighs and sniffles, along with some whispering among the clan mates.

"Minnowstar? Dying because of the river? That seems unheard of!" some cat whispered.

"Well, it happened, whether you believe it or not," replied another cat solemnly. Icefrost couldn't tell who was talking.

"Anyways, this means I will need to choose a new deputy," Icefrost continued. "Grasspelt will be RiverClan's new deputy."

"Grasspelt! Grasspelt!" cats cheered, while the new deputy looked genuinely surprised. The clan seemed to approve of their new leader's choice.

"Thank you! I will be honored to serve RiverClan as it's new deputy," Grasspelt mewed as he padded up to the base of Highlog to take his place. Icefrost nodded, then jumped down off of Highlog.

"Everyone should get some rest, we have a busy day tomorrow." She crawled through the brambles and into her nest, then fell asleep in the blink of an eye.

Chapter 7.

So sorry for the super late update!!

The next day, Icefrost was awoken to the bright sunshine peeking into the warrior's den. Yawning and stretching, she exited the den. Grasspelt was found in the clearing at the base of Highlog, surrounded by some warriors who looked healthy enough to go on patrols after last night's battle. Apparently he was eager to start his new position.

"How about Robinwing, you lead a hunting patrol with Hollowfern and Ashenfang?" Robinwing and Ashenfang nodded, them went off to find Hollowfern.

Icefrost paused for a second, then called, "Grasspelt! Have you sent any other patrols out yet?" When he shook his head, Icefrost beckoned him and Troutjump to talk. After talking a little while, she felt decided. She padded over and leaped to the top of Highlog, feeling refreshed after a good night's rest.

"Let all cats old enough to catch their own prey join for a Clan meeting," she yowled. Some cats came out of her den, while the ones already in the clearing merely gathered around. "Last night, some cats proved themselves in battle. Brightpaw, Cougarpaw, and Toadpaw are ready to become warriors!" A loud chorus of excited mews rang out in the clearing. As the three apprentices stepped forward, Icefrost jumped down from Highlog and looked upward. "I, Icefrost, leader of RiverClan, call upon my warrior ancestors to look down on these three apprentices. They have trained hard to understand the ways of your noble code, and I commend them as warriors to you in their turn." The silver she-cat looked down at the apprentices before her. "Toadpaw, Brightpaw, and Cougarpaw, do you promise to uphold the warrior code and protect and defend this clan, even at the cost of your lives?"

"I do," answered Toadpaw. The others replied soon after.

"Then by the powers of StarClan, I give you your warrior names: Brightpaw, from this moment you will be known as Brighttail. StarClan honors your selflessness and hunting skills, and we welcome you as a full warrior of RiverClan." Icefrost rested her head on Brighttail's, as Brighttail respectfully licked Icefrost's shoulder. The new warrior then went to stand by the other warriors.

"Cougarpaw, from this moment forward you will be known as Cougarheart. StarClan honors your courage and strength, and we welcome you as a full warrior of RiverClan." Icefrost rested her muzzle on Cougarheart's head, and he gave her another lick full of respect and gratitude. He also went to go stand with the other warriors and his sister.

At last it was Toadpaw's turn. Her heart swelled at the thought of naming her own apprentice. "Toadpaw, from this moment forward you shall be known as Toadstrike. StarClan honors your bravery and fighting skills, as we welcome you as a full warrior of RiverClan." As Icefrost put her head on Toadstrike's she whispered, "Congratulations," and he gave her a lick.

As he went to go stand with his siblings, the cats started calling their new names. "Brighttail! Cougarheart! Toadstrike!" they chanted. Icefrost caught a glimpse of her former apprentice before he was swept back into the mob of cats that had surrounded him and his siblings. They shared a smile.

The rest of the morning went by fairly quick. By the time the sun was a little past its peak, it was time to get going. "Icefrost! Beechpaw has been looking for you. I think she is ready to go to the Moonpool. It's amazing to think you will be RiverClan's new leader!" Acornstream called from the fresh kill pile. The Moonpool was the clans' way of connecting with StarClan, their spirit ancestors, if help was wanted or for special ceremonies. All new leaders were to go to the Moonpool to receive their nine lives from StarClan.

Icefrost nodded to her mother. "Let me get something to eat to start me off!" She joined her mother and chose a small mole to have. When done, she walked over to Beechpaw's den. She was

found making some sort of a herb bundle.

"We should get going. I just need to put a little golden rod poultice on Toadstrike's scratches, and then we can get going." Beechpaw mewed.

Icefrost realized that she should check on him, too- he did used to be her apprentice recently, after all! "I'll come with you," she said. They walked out of the medicine cat's den and over to the warrior's den, where Toadstrike was resting. Squeezing in through the brambles, they found him taking a morning bath. "How are you doing? Beechpaw has come to give you some herbs to help your wounds." Icefrost mewed.

"I'm feeling a lot better this morning," Toadstrike replied as Beechpaw started applying the poultice. "It mostly just aches now, but when I run my left hind leg doesn't feel very good."

"I told him to rest for a few days, and not to go on any patrols." Beechpaw said, putting some juice on a scratch on Toadstrike's left side.

Icefrost nodded. "Ok. Well, I'll be waiting outside." Exiting the warrior's den, the soon to be official leader of RiverClan sat down by the entrance to the camp and began to groom herself. She observed that the entrance to the camp and the warriors den would need to be patched and branches twisted into place. Parts of the walls would need to be strengthened or fixed, especially where there were only reeds blocking the camp from the rest of RiverClan territory. Grasspelt was organizing the morning patrols, and sending a couple cats to start on the repairs.

Icefrost spotted Beechpaw stepping out of the medicine den. As the medicine cat hurried forward, Icefrost stood up. Together they walked out of camp and made their way to the fork in the river. The two cats swam through and shook off at the opposite bank, then pelted into the woods. Racing between trees, logs, and bushes, they reached the WindClan border.

As Icefrost and Beechpaw slowed down to a stop, they looked out before them to view the quiet border. There were no sign of cats,

but a stench of WindClan, as if a patrol had been by earlier in the day. With a quick glance between each other, they started forward again and into rival clan territory.

The journey went pretty smoothly. Staying two tail-lengths from the water, as agreed by all the clans when traveling on rival territory by the shore, the two did not encounter any cats, until a WindClan patrol came by.

"Stop! Who are you?" called the leader of the patrol, Gorsetail, followed by Breezepelt and Furzenose.

When Icefrost turned to face the WindClan warriors, they recognized her as RiverClan's leader instantly. She mewed boldly, "I am Icefrost, RiverClan's new leader after Minnowstar's death, and this is Beechpaw, the new medicine cat. I am going to receive my nine lives from StarClan."

"Oh, well, then keep on your way. Good luck," mutteringly replied Gorsetail, now being more respectable.

Icefrost and Beechpaw continued along the shore. They turned left at the start of WindClan's border with ThunderClan, and started up the rocky slope. Once, Beechpaw had slipped into a rabbit hole, but nothing else disturbed their trek.

When they reached the bramble wall of the entrance, the two RiverClan she-cats stopped and looked down at the sparkling Moonpool. It was quiet a spectacle as the moon was starting to rise and the sun was sinking below the horizon. The water housed only a faint ripple from the wind, making it surprisingly close to being as smooth as glass. Icefrost could clearly see her reflection, even from the top of the depression.

Icefrost started down first, as Beechpaw followed soon after. The new leader lay down calmly, and gazed into the water. She took a lick, which disturbed the water into a hundred ripples, disforming her silver tabby reflection. With that, she closed her eyes and let her chin rest on her paws.

Chapter 8.

So sorry for another late update. A lot of the writing you will find in this chapter will be thanks to The Ultimate guide: Bramblestar's Nine Lives and Tigerstar's Nine Lives, along with The Darkest Hour. Expect another update by the end of Thanksgiving weekend! Thanks for reading everybody!

Icefrost waited. Nothing was happening. She heard a small sigh, and slowly peeked one eye open to find only the Moonpool and Beechpaw in view.

"You have to put your whole nose in. For special ceremonies it takes more." Beechpaw mewed. Icefrost sighed too and pushed her nose into the water.

The freezing needle-like touch shocked her and she pulled away quickly. Hesitantly she put her nose back in and tried to relax. Almost immediately did she feel sleepy. Icefrost let it take over. Nothing seemed to happen this time either except the fact that she felt like she was being watched by many cats. Opening her eyes and looking, she gasped. Lots and lots of starry cats were gathered in the hollow. Some she recognized, many she didn't. One dark grey pelt that was stepping forward caught her attention.

"Minnowstar!" The old leader looked much younger and healthier than the last time the two she-cats had seen each other.

"Welcome to StarClan, Icefrost!" Minnowstar said for all cats to hear.

"Thank you." Icefrost felt as though she should say something. "Our clan misses you and Willowshine."

"Yes, she is the second cat I spoke of. But RiverClan will get out of

this troubling time. Now, we must begin." Minnowstar stepped closer and touched her muzzle to Icefrost's head. "I give you a life to have the greatest pride in your clan. Honor the legacy that has been made by great leaders and have the courage to make yours." Icefrost felt a warm sensation fill her body that caused her fur to stand on end. She imagined all the RiverClan cats around her and could feel their support like a blast of wind that could fire her up to do whatever she wanted. Icefrost was exhilarated. Minnowstar dipped her head then stepped back.

A dark grey tabby stepped forward. Icefrost smiled as she recognized the healthy-looking cat. "Willowshine! We have missed you so much."

"Hello, Icefrost. Congratulations in becoming leader of RiverClan. I am to give you your next life." She pressed her muzzle to Icefrost's. "With my life I give you compassion. Use it to understand what is important to other cats and let that guide your paws." Icefrost instantly saw images in her mind of many images of cats in pain, filled with joy and love, or hissing. She felt a need to help, but didn't know where to start.

"Good luck, Icefrost," Willowshine whispered. "Make me proud." She stepped back.

"Thank you," Icefrost whispered back.

A skinny dark grey she-cat padded forward next. "Who are you?" Icefrost asked.

"My name is Graypool," the cat replied. "I lived in RiverClan before you were born. I used to be a queen, and lived a long life. I give you a life for listening to your elders, and for taking advice even when it might seem unrealistic. The oldest have seen the most. Trust their wisdom and learn from their mistakes." She stretched up to touch Icefrost's cheek.

Many voices started murmuring in Icefrost's mind, and she was pushed around by unseen cats. She strained to hear what they were saying, but the voices were too quiet and too numerous to tell one from another.

Icefrost's mind started to clear and she made out the form of a different cat in front of her. This time it was a dark grey tabby tom that she didn't recognize. "I am Rippletail. I died when fighting beavers that had blocked up the river with trees. You have never met me, but I have watched you from StarClan and know that you will make a great leader." Rippletail bended down to touch his cheek to hers. "I give you a life of exploring beyond the borders of the clans. Watch for the possibilities that lie in unexpected places. You are not trapped by clan boundaries." Icefrost felt as though she had left the hollow and was now trekking through unfamiliar woods. Her pads were hardened from walking and the scent of mountains was not far off. The next things she knew she was standing on a cliff overlooking a vast body of water as the wind made her fur dance. The sun seemed to be drowning in the water and she could not see the other side.

In the next instant, Icefrost was back in the Moonpool's hollow. Standing in front of her was a cat she recognized. "Cloudleap?!"

"Yes, it is me," Cloudleap confirmed. I was watching when Minnowstar appointed you as deputy, and I think that she made a wise choice. Sadly, you didn't get to be deputy much to get more experience of leading the clan, but I think you were born to lead RiverClan someday."

"Why, thank you! It will be an honor."

Cloudleap smiled, then lowered his head to Icefrost's muzzle. "Anyways, I also have a life to give you. My life is given with loyalty. Always remember that the clan comes first, and stay true to every cat in it." This time, Icefrost felt a glow course through her body. It made her feel warm to the tip of her tail.

When Icefrost looked up, Cloudleap had left and the sixth cat that came made tears come to her eyes, but she smiled. It was Brownpaw. Brownpaw was Icefrost's apprentice a few seasons ago. A monster had killed him when he was first learning to cross the Thunderpath. The rest of his litter was still-born, so his mother, Icewing, grieved for him much.

"I get to give you a life, Icefrost! My life comes with the gift of

mentoring. Use it to train your young cats to their best," Brownpaw said as former apprentice and mentor touched noses. This caused Icefrost to have a sudden fear, then something barrel into and over her. A breath-taking pain struck like lightning through her entire body and felt as if every bone was breaking in her body. The young tabby realized she must be feeling what Brownpaw felt in the last moments of his life. "Take a message to Icewing for me please. Tell her that she should not fear having more kits. They will be fine, I will make sure." Icefrost nodded, even though she was still blinded by pain.

As the pain slowly left, Icefrost was aware of a different cat in front of her. It was Mosspelt, a queen who had died of greencough last leaf-bare. Mosspelt touched her muzzle to Icefrost's cheek. "My life is for understanding that it is not only warriors who play an important role in taking care of the clan. Queens in the nursery do just as much. We feed all tiny kits, raise all new apprentices. Honor the mothers, Icefrost, for we give you all a start in life."

Icefrost was instantly back in the nursery, surrounded by warm eyes and pleasant purrs. She swelled with thankfulness for all the deeds these cats had done for their clan. "Thank you," Icefrost murmured. The queens surrounding her nodded and kept soothing her until she felt like she wanted to sleep.

"Wake up! You don't want to fall asleep during your leader ceremony!" mewed a voice. Icefrost jolted awake to see yet another unfamiliar cat in front of her. In front of her was a tom with blue-gray fur. "My name is Stonefur. Along with many others, I died thanks to Tigerstar. He did not like half-clan cats, especially me since I was half ThunderClan and one of Bluestar's kits." He stopped speaking to bend down and touch his muzzle to Icefrost's. The young tabby shut her eyes, ready for whatever this life would be like. "With my life I give you the courage to speak against injustice, for pursuing truth. Lies provide shadows for more sinister things to dwell in. Do not fear truth, Icefrost."

Light shot through Icefrost, making her paws shake. Then her mind cleared and was filled with astoundingly bright sunlight. A stinging pain arrived, then peace. She took a deep calming breath.

"One more then it will be over," a tiny voice soothed Icefrost. She peeked open one eye to see a small kit watching her, with Minnowstar sitting quietly behind it.

Icefrost gasped. "Deerkit?"

"Yes! Icefrost, I've missed you *so* much! And you've grown so big!" Deerkit squeaked excitedly.

"Oh, the whole clan has missed you, too! I've never forgotten you, my little sister. Ever since the day that greencough... well, ever since the day you died, there has never been a day I don't think of you." Icefrost had trouble saying the last sentence. She shook herself. "Anyways, do you have a life for me?"

"Oh, yes! Of course!" She hesitated, looking back at Minnowstar. Minnowstar nudged the kit forwards encouragingly. Icefrost bent down, as Deerkit stretched upwards to touch noses. "I give you a life of love. If you use it for your clan, your clan will return the favor. Love finds a way. Use that way." No pain came from this life. The warmth of a green-leaf sun shone through Icefrost so luminously that she could reflect it to others. It was the type of love that one gets as a kit while nuzzling their mother. She gazed at Deerkit, who seemed to be older than she really was at the moment.

A long silenced spread through the clearing. All the StarClan cats had risen, along with Minnowstar. Deerkit stepped back as Minnowstar signaled to Icefrost to rise. She stood unsteadily from crouching so long.

"I hail you by your new name, Icestar. You do not live your old life anymore," Minnowstar announced with a loud and clear voice. "You now have the nine lives of a leader, and StarClan grants you the guardianship of RiverClan. Defend it well, honor your ancestors and the traditions of the warrior code, and care for the young and old alike."

"Icestar! Icestar!" The cats of StarClan cheered like members of a clan would for a new warrior. The voices fades out as Icestar was removed from the spirit world and placed back into the normal.

Chapter 9.

Hello, readers. I updated the Allegiances at the beginning of the book. Normally, they would have to stay the same through out the book because it can only be printed once, but on Wattpad we can change things! Happy Thankgiving!

_____

"Welcome home, Icestar! How was your journey?" Grasspelt called from the bottom of Highlog.

"Successful! Is Icewing in the camp? I'd like to have a word with her. How has it been here?" Icestar replied.

"Everything is fairly peaceful. We have started rebuilding the wall." Grasspelt flicked his tail towards Pebblefoot and Rushrunner, who were taking out old reeds that had been torn up. "And Toadstrike says he is feeling a little better, but not enough to start hunting again." Beechpaw hurried off to check on him. Then Grasspelt gave Icestar a questioning look. "I sent Icewing out on a border patrol. I hope everything is fine?"

"Oh, yes, only good news." Icefrost gave her deputy a small smile. He nodded and smiled in return.

While waiting, Icestar went to help Pebblefoot and Rushrunner in cleaning up debri. The three worked in cleaning the camp floor until Icewing's patrol entered the camp a little past sunhigh.

Icestar immediately dropped the bundle of branches, achieving a startled look from the other two workers, and padded over to Icewing. Icewing had gone over to Grasspelt to report that there had been no activity by the border with ShadowClan. Just before Icewing was about to take a nap in the warriors den, Icestar called to her. The senior warrior turned around, slightly surprised to be called by her leader.

"What is it, Icestar?" Icewing dipped her head to show respect.

"Come with me." Icestar lead Icewing into the leader's den for privacy. The old smell reminded them both of their beloved former leader, Minnowstar. When they sat down, Icestar thought a moment. *I'm not supposed to talk about my ceremony with other cats,* she thought.

"When I was receiving my lives, I saw Brownpaw." Icewing visibly tensed."He told me to give you a message. He said that you should not worry about having more kits. He will make sure they are fine. You should just do what you think will make you happy."

Icewing seemed to ponder a little about this, but was more relaxed. She stared at Icestar with an inquisitive gaze. "That is all," Icestar mewed quickly. Icewing nodded but didn't make any move to get up. She slowly started to smile a little, which was one of the rare things that she did lately. She nodded again while standing up to leave.

"Thank you. I think I needed to here that." Icewing dipped her her to Icestar, turned around, and walked out of the den with a small spring in her step. The spring was only slightly visible, but Icewing seemed to be in her own world which had just found a new source of light, a new sun.

Icestar was left alone in her new den surrounded by an air of dawning happiness. Feeling as though she had done her job, Icestar sat to think what to do next. It was her first day as an official leader. She could tell Grasspelt that she would like to take out a hunting patrol. She could take a nap. She could help with the camp wall some more. She felt as though she could do anything, aside from things that were, of course, against the warrior code.

This was a new sense of power that Icestar had not experienced before. This was what it was like to be leader, to have all the power over a clan, to have the ability to influence all the clans. It puts a lot of pressure on just four cats that potentially could change the clans to be like never before. When Icestar thought about it that way, her position became suddenly more overbearing and ominous. Her role was like a shadow: it doesn't seem that scary until you've

had time to sit down and think about it. *Maybe this is why some leaders seem to go a little awry, they have so much pressure on them.*

Determined not to let these new thoughts bother her, Icestar stood up and shook herself. She would do the best she could, and if she was half as good as some of the greatest leaders in Clan history, then she would succeed. The new leader padded outside and looked around.

Icestar spotted Pebblefoot and Rushrunner taking a break from the wall. Duskfur and Acornstream were talking outside the nursery, while Mallownose was lying in a sunny patch of ground. It had been a while since Acornstream announced she was having a second litter. The kits would be coming any day now. Toadstrike was sitting outside the warriors den sharing tongues with Brighttail.

Icestar walked over to the two newest warriors. "Hello, you two. How are you feeling after the battle?"

"Great!" Toadstrike replied. "Beechpaw said I could start going on patrols again tomorrow. It'll be great to finally get to do warrior stuff!"

"*I* told him to be careful anyways." Brighttail rolled onto her back and playfully batted Toadstrike's ear. "I don't want my brother to get hurt again."

"I will, I will!" Toadstrike said, exasperated. "You don't have to remind me!"

"It sounds like you both are feeling good." Icestar said with a smile. "I'm going to go check on Cedarbrook. She didn't seem to fare well in the battle with WindClan." She began to head inside the warriors den.

"Wait, Icestar! There's something I want to mention before you go." Toadstrike called. Icestar backed out.

"What is it?" Icestar sat back down. Even Brighttail appeared confused.

"I've been worried about Beechpaw. When Willowshine died, she

didn't give Beechpaw her full name." There was silence as Toadstrike chose his next words carefully. "I- how- what are you going to do? Can *you* give Beechpaw a medicine cat name?"

Icestar had not thought about this deeply, being made leader only last night. Of course, she had realized it at different intervals, but not really considered it."I don't know. I think Willowshine has to do it, but she is... well, dead. Maybe I can visit her at the Moonpool. Thanks for saying something."

Toadstrike nodded. Icestar stepped back into the warrior's den to check on Cedarbrook as she mulled this over in her head.

Hey! I did it! I met my goal. :D This is like my first filler chapter, besides the very first, and it's also my eighth one! XD

Chapter 10.

A quarter-moon later, the RiverClan camp was filled with all the cats that were walking to the Gathering. The Gathering was the time once a month when a group of cats from each Clan would meet on the Island to discuss happenings in each Clan's territory. Clan leaders would sit on the Great Oak with all other around them, and would be the main ones to speak.

Icestar padded over to the group. "Are we ready?" She whispered to her deputy. Most cats were milling around, so it was close to impossible to tell whether she had everyone.

"I believe so. I can't quite tell. After all, we are herding cats," Grasspelt said with a joking wink.

Icestar smiled at his remark and stepped to the front of the group. All cats suddenly became quieter at the show of authority. This was Icestar's chance. "Ok, is everyone here? It is time to be going."

Cats shuffled about, looking for missing members of the group. Robinwing piped up. "I don't see Petalfur!" Other cats agreed, so Grasspelt went off to find the stray she-cat. When all cats were assembled, Icestar nodded and raced out of camp with Grasspelt, Petalfur, Mallownose, Graybrook, Toadstrike, Brighttail, Cougarheart, Robinwing, and Flickerpaw.

Icestar started to reflect on what she was going to say when it was her turn. She was leader now, and held much more responsibility than the deputy. The past days had gone by smoothly. Each sunrise some cats would get up and start working on the camp walls, and each sunset the RiverClan camp would look even better than before. As the RiverClan cats trotted downstream, Icestar thought of all the problems that still remained, such as Beechpaw's name and the badger. The badger had not been seen or shown evidence of living near by since the day of the battle. The unspoken question hung in the air of whether it was still lurking RiverClan territory.

RiverClan stepped out of the bushes and over to the log used to cross the lake to the Island. Seeing nobody other than fellow Clan members, they leaped onto the bridge-like log and walked across.

Entering the clearing used for Gatherings, Icestar saw that RiverClan was the first to arrive. This was normal, since RiverClan's territory was closest to the island. In fact, all cats had to cross over RiverClan territory to get to the island.

Icestar claimed a branch with a good view of all cats. She stood on it as she gazed over the Gathering's clearing. It looked so much smaller from this vantage point. She could see all her cats from up here. Toadstrike, Cougarheart, and Brighttail were talking together, probably excited for their first Gathering as warriors. Flickerpaw was exploring the edges if the clearing with Robinwing close behind. The others were either sharing tongues or talking amongst themselves.

Soon, all the other Clans had arrived. The other leaders joined Icestar on the Great Oak. Whitestar of ThunderClan gave Icestar a curious look.

"Hello, Icefrost. Where's Minnowstar? Is she ill?" The news had not traveled to ThunderClan, so Icestar had to break it herself.

"Ice*star* now. She died in a fight. WindClan got too angry about the prey problem. They decided to attack, and accidentally killed Minnowstar in the process." Icestar decide not to mention what happened to Willowshine at this moment, and to wait for the Gathering to start to mention it.

"Oh! I didn't know. I am sorry for RiverClan's loss. For all of the Clan's loss, really. She was a respectable leader." Whitestar bowed her head in grief.

Tawnystar of ShadowClan stepped in. "Are we ready to start?" She mewed to the other leaders. Whitestar lifted her head and nodded. Tawnystar sounded the starting yowl. When all murmurs had faded, she said loud enough for all cats to here,"Cats of all Clans, welcome to the Gathering. We are joined by Icestar this moon, who is the new leader of RiverClan." Icestar could here cheering from her

RiverClan cats and smiled sheepishly. "Would you like to start?" Tawnystar asked Icestar.

"It would be my pleasure," Icestar replied and stepped forward. She took a deep, reassuring breath that filled her entire chest. It didn't make her any calmer, but her voice was able to be heard to the back row quiet easily.

"RiverClan is healing well after our battle with WindClan. Sadly, it resulted in Minnowstar's death, so now I am here to take her place. We will all grieve for her, but we must move on." Sad mews could now be heard among the assembled cats.

Icestar let them quiet on their own, as she fumbled with her thoughts on how to word the incident with the badger. She didn't want to make the Clan sound weak, yet it was her duty to report was had happened since the last Gathering. "After the battle had ended, a badger attacked us and killed Willowshine our medicine cat."

More gasps arose from the crowd. *The Clan must sound like it is falling apart!* thought Icestar. *If I keep this up, I'm sure it'll sound like I'd accept help from a fox.* Already Tawnystar was of out to open her mouth to speak. *Probably to offer help. But no! We can take of ourselves.*

Icestar jumped in. "Willowshine did have an apprentice, so we do have a cat that knows medicine. RiverClan is already ready healing, and I think we will back to normal before too long. We do have three new warriors, Toadstrike, Brighttail, and Cougarheart." RiverClan cheered at the mention of the new warriors, while Icestar nodded and stepped back.

Emberstar stepped forward next. "I am sorry to hear about both your cats, and again for give me about Minnowstar. Feel free to ask if you need anything, maybe medicine supplies from Whiskerpelt," he mewed humbly. Icestar knew that it would be hard to, but she might as well start trying now. The WindClan leader went on to tell about the birth of Heathertail's kits (which he was very proud of since he was the father) and that WindClan is as healthy as ever, despite the prey problem.

Next came Tawnystar who mentioned the kittypets that live on ShadowClan territory getting a little feisty. Whitestar reported the apprenticeship of Bluepaw and Cloudpaw, who were Dovewing and Bumblestripe's kits. The brother and sister blushed as their new names were cheered.

As Whitestar stepped back, Emberstar, being the eldest leader, asked, "Anything else?" Since no leader said anything else, Emberstar announced, "I believe this Gathering is over. May StarClan light your path." With that, he leapt gracefully down the Great Oak. Tawnystar followed, except used scrambling as a technique rather than leaping. Whitestar followed, then Icestar.

"Good job, Icestar." Grasspelt came up behind her. "There isn't much else you could have said. It is hard to tell other Clans of bad news in ours. I have watched Minnowstar do it, and even she struggled."

Icestar felt flattered. She hadn't thought she handled it well, but apparently Grasspelt did. She looked at him. "Thank you. I knew that we can take care of ourselves, so I was just standing up for the truth."

"O- of course," Grasspelt said with a stutter, then hurried off to go find everyone.

Icestar was suspicious. Why did Grasspelt seem so nervous? He didn't seem like the kind of cat that would betray his own Clan. No, that was definitely not it. She displayed a puzzled smile, then followed after Grasspelt to round up the RiverClan cats.

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So, what do you think is up with Grasspelt? Leaving you with a cliff hangar! Mwahaha! Sorry for another late update.

Chapter 11.

OK. So you're checking Wattpad and you look at your notifications and you do a double take. *What?!?!* you think. *Noooo, really?!?! O.o* Yes, it is what you think it is: the day Left Flailing was updated!!!!!!!! 😂😂😁😂😂😁😂 I'm sorry that it may seem as though this book was on hold, but it was not supposed to be. A little over a month ago, I had this book all planned out and thought it would go faster, but apparently not! *laughs sheepishly* I'm terribly sorry for the long wait. I have rewarded you with a longer chapter!!! Enjoy!!

"So? How's she doing? Are they okay?" Robinwing peppered Beechpaw with questions. Acornstream lay on her side by her mate as the young medicine cat checked her over. Icestar sat with Ashenfang and Graybrook patiently next to their mother.

"Your kits should be coming before too long. Maybe within a half moon?" Beechpaw sat up and smiled at the rapt family. "They seem to be healthy young ones, and Acornstream is doing great, too."

"Oh, do you hear that, Acornstream? They are going to be wonderful!" Robinwing purred contentedly as he arched his back and brushed against Acornstream.

Acornstream stood up, slightly stiff, but she was still able to return the gesture. Ashenfang, Graybrook, and Icestar joined in the celebration by standing up and enthusiastically mewing congratulations and thinking up names. Beechpaw just sat back and looked thoughtful. "A second litter! I wonder how many there will be?" Acornstream wondered aloud when the talk had died down a little.

Robinwing stopped to gaze lovingly at his mate. "A number that will help keep the clan going for many seasons to come, I'm sure. I'm just glad that green-leaf is nearly here. It will give them a much

nicer welcome than the cold of leaf-bare!"

Acornstream shyly nodded and turned back to Beechpaw. "Thank you, Beechpaw, that really helped."

Beechpaw shook out of her quiet reverie and nodded at the happy family. "No problem."

All of the family stepped out of the den chatting except for Icestar, who stayed behind, smiling to herself. "You seem to be doing well," Icestar mewed to Beechpaw. "I'm sure you still miss Willowshine, but we all do. How do feel about everything?"

Beechpaw sighed. *She's so young,* Icestar thought dejectedly, looking at the medicine cat. *She shouldn't have to do this all by herself.* "To be honest, I don't often feel completely sure that I have the right herbs or supplies. I feel like I'm forgetting something important and it makes me jittery. But then sometimes I feel a presence that it seems no one else can. It feels like Willowshine is there, and she is trying to help me remember, but I can't always get to her. It gets frustrating, not knowing what she is trying to say." Beechpaw stopped speaking and frowned sadly. "Also it seems all not right, since she didn't get to give me my medicine cat name." She look desperately at Icestar, who stared back.

"Is there anything I can do to help? What if we got someone else to help you that is a warrior or a queen? Someone who knows a little medicine skills, and who would be willing to help with the harder things."

"Okay, that sounds like a good start," Beechpaw replied.

Icestar flicked her tail toward the entrance. "Come on, let's go ask. I've got a few ideas of who would help."

After a few words between the two, they decided on a good choice. All that was left was to ask. "I hope she says yes," Beechpaw mewed nervously. Icestar gave a reassuring lick. They hurried over to the nursery, and looked inside.

"Hello? Is Duskfur in here?" Icestar called.

"I'm here! What do you need?" a soft voice replied from the back. A ball of fluff lifted its head and blinked from a nap. Duskfur stood up and blundered over to the two waiting cats.

"We need your help," Icestar started. "You see, Beechpaw has been feeling a little worried and overloaded without Willowshine. So we thought up some ideas and finally decided that maybe we could ask someone to help out with some of the more complex things. Someone with some knowledge of medicine cat skills." Duskfur nodded and continued to listen, sure she knew where this was going.

"Evidently, we thought of you, since you learned some things back when you broke your foot and spent some time in the medicine den. So we came here to ask for your help, and here we are now, telling the story. In short, would you be willing to help out Beechpaw, until she at least feels more confident?"

Duskfur answered without hesitation. "Of course I'll help! It'll be good for me to do something other than help Acornstream with her kits. Why didn't you ask sooner? Let's go see what we can do right now!" With that, she walked out of the nursery with a new sense of good purpose and practically ran over to the medicine den. Icestar and Beechpaw glanced at each other before squeezing out of the nursery, and Beechpaw hurried after Duskfur.

Icestar stood, feeling one good deed done for the day. Now what? Of course there were things that always needed to be done, like going on hunting and border patrols. But there was something that had been bugging her for a few weeks now that she couldn't get out of her head: how was Beechpaw supposed to learn her official medicine cat name? Willowshine wasn't... well, *alive* anymore to give it when the time would be right!

Then and there was when Icestar decided she would go to the Moonpool and ask for help. Could she do it herself? Should she bring Beechpaw with her? No, probably not- she didn't want to make the young medicine cat walk all the way there to find out nothing. Icestar padded over to the warriors den to see if her deputy was taking a nap, to inform him of her plans.

Upon entering, she saw a few warriors chatting or sharing tongues- Icewing and Pebblefoot were sharing tongues while Mallownose was lightly snoring. Sure enough, there Grasspelt slept with his light brown tail over his paws and nose.

He suddenly shrunk in Icestar's eyes to look like a tiny kit, waiting for his mother to return, maybe born a moon earlier. So innocent, just a little ball of fluff, probably hoping to become deputy of his Clan one day. He had achieved that goal, and now here he was all grown up and helping laws his Clan. Icestar smiled as he stretched in his sleep. *Did that really happen*? She shook herself out of her thoughts and nudged his soft fur with her paw. He only shifted his body. She nudged harder and mewed his name.

"Grasspelt! Wake up! I need to talk to talk to you." He blinked bleary eyes, stood up, stretched, and shook off.

"Wha...?" When his eyes focused on Icestar, they became more alert. "Icestar! What do you need?"

"I need to go to the Moonpool for a night. Can you handle the camp for a little while? I won't be gone long." Gazing at him, she could see his eyes thinking. Then he nodded.

"Yes, I can do that. Do you need to take anyone with you? Maybe an apprentice, since you know how it is good for them to travel somewhere they wouldn't normally go before becoming a warrior."

Icestar nodded back. "I'll take Flickerpaw. Thank you!" Then she backed out of the den to search for the apprentice.

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Icestar stared down at the smooth, glassy water below her. Glancing to her left she saw Flickerpaw gaping at the sight. The leader started down first. Flickerpaw followed only after shaking his head clear.

"If you want to just sit over by the side of the pool, I shouldn't be gone long. Well, it'll look like I'm still here, but my spirit will be with StarClan." Flickerpaw nodded and sat down.
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Icestar stepped towards the Moonpool and crouched down. She pressed her nose into the icy water. Just like the last time, nothing seemed to happen. *I put my nose in. Was I supposed to take a sip? No...*

"Wake up, Icestar! We don't have all night!" A voice mewed near the leader's ear. Icestar jumped.

"Willowshine!" Icestar pressed her muzzle against the dead medicine cat's starry soft fur. "Oh, everyone back at home misses you! Especially Beechpaw, she seems so lonely!"

Willowshine returned the gesture. "Oh I wish I could have stayed with her longer! She seemed to have such a cheerful air when doing medicine cat duties. And I miss you too. Although I do enjoy seeing Mothwing again. I hope everything is fine in RiverClan?"

Icestar backed up a little and tilted her head. "Sort of. We haven't seen the badger again, so that is good. WindClan seems to be peaceful." Behind Willowshine, Icestar glimpsed Flickerpaw playing with a tall blade of grass that managed to poke up near the edge of the cliff face . "Can Flickerpaw...?"

Willowshine followed Icestar's gaze then shook her head. "She cannot see or hear us. She only sees your sleeping body," she mewed, nodding towards Icestar's still figure. "But I imagine that you have not come here just to talk?"

Icestar nodded. "Yes. I wanted to ask you about Beechpaw's name. Since you are really, well, *dead,* we were wondering how you would manage to do the naming ceremony. You can't exactly appear in normal life, which is where naming ceremonies always happen."

Willowshine smiled. "I have been thinking about this. I have a plan, but it cannot happen yet. You must be patient. No, I cannot tell you now." she mewed, at the sign of Icestar starting to speak. "Like normal, only the medicine cat should know when and what."

"But why?! Why does StarClan do this? There is no rule about it in the warrior code! Does StarClan *enjoy* doing this to leaders and medicine cats?" The young leader's voice slightly rose.

"No, no, of course not! We just never know when an evil might rise. Not even StarClan can predict everything." Willowshine brushed her shimmering muzzle against Icestar's flank one last time before slowly starting to fade from view.

"But what could evil do with a name?! No, wait! Stay!" Grasping the air to try to hold onto Willowshine worked to no avail. She just kept fading until a thin outline of starry fur was visible and a paw could pass through like she was a ghost. Soon, the vision started to fade from view as Icestar slowly plunged back into the waking world.

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"Icestar! You're back! How was it? Did you get an answer?" Icestar had awoken and walked back mostly in silence with Flickerpaw. Getting home, they had gone straight to their dens. In the morning, Beechpaw had found Icestar almost right away. Icestar sighed. Beechpaw really was energetic sometimes, just not always during the more useful moments.

"Yes, Beechpaw, I talked to Willowshine. She has a plan." Icestar hesitated. "But she chose to not state it."

Beechpaw pouted. "Why would she do that? She always shared nearly everything with me. She told me many stories of when she was an apprentice, seeing the Great Battle with the Dark Forest and the time when the sun disappeared. Why not this?"

Icestar shook her head. "I do not fully know. It has to do with keeping you safe, so whatever it is must be a good precaution."

Beechpaw padded ahead mumbling to herself about the Great Battle and precautions. Icestar displayed a look of frustration, before sighing and hurrying after Beechpaw.

Whew! Done. This was a longer chapter to keep you going for hopefully a little- 1860 words of actual chapter! Sooooo sorry about such the long wait. I'm kind of loosing the enthusiasm I had at the beginning of this story, but I'm going to try to stick
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with and finish the story! Vote, comment, and eat cupcakes!

-Emrysstar✧

Chapter 12.

Whew! Done with the next chapter. I was hoping to get this done by the end of Spring Break and- oh, darn, it's Monday! Well, close enough, right? For those of you who are just starting Spring Break, here's something for you to do on vacation! It is kind of a filler, sorry, but it's something to keep the book going. Enjoy!

-Emrysstar✧

A little more than a quarter moon passed. All was quiet and back to normal, aside from the problems that weren't immediately facing RiverClan. Warriors ate their sun high meal, some talked quietly, and others dosed in the light of slightly warm dappled ground. As new-leaf approached, more of these sunbath places appeared for the eager cats.

The sun shone high when Icestar poked her head out of her den after a nap. She stepped out, shook off, and viewed the camp. Spotting warriors gathering around Grasspelt, she padded up to the group to see the patrols go off.

"Ok, erm, Icewing! Would you lead Hollowfern and Ashenfang on a border patrol from about the treebridge to the edge of the ShadowClan border?" When the she-cat nodded, the deputy continued. "Alright, then, let's have Robinwing lead Rushrunner and Cougarheart on another patrol around the other side. And Petalfur, Graybrook and Troutjump be one hunting patrol while Mossylight and Cougarheart be the other. I don't care who leads-" Grasspelt was interrupted as the patrols were about to split off.

"Hey, wait!" Robinwing called. "You have Cougarheart going on two different patrols."

"You promised I could go on a patrol!" whined Brighttail. Grasspelt bit his lip and, noticing Icestar stood behind the crowd, gave her a

desperate look.

Icestar smiled and nodded. "What if Cougarheart went with Robinwing, and I took Mossylight and Brighttail on the other hunting patrol?" Grasspelt breathed a sigh of relief, smiled back, and nodded. No one else mentioned any problems, so the patrols made their way towards the camp entrance.

Icestar stepped a little quicker once outside. Patrol following, she started towards the river, splashed through, and sprinted downstream to the island. The lake lay as full as ever with water and fish. Looking back, Icestar spotted her patrol racing towards her.

"You're faster than I remember!" panted Mossylight. Brighttail couldn't speak.

"Or maybe you haven't done enough running lately," teased Icestar.

"Hey!" Mossylight playfully swiped a paw at her leader, claws sheathed, who ducked and swiped back. Mossylight jumped and landed on top of Icestar, who dropped and rolled, landing Icestar on top. She smiled and climbed off of her friend, who scrambled up. When Icestar turned towards the river to actually start hunting, the younger warrior took her chance and sprang at her friend. Icestar slipped and landed on her back, with Mossylight over her. The wind knocked out of her, Icestar surrendered.

"I thought that was going to be a truce!" she exclaimed. Mossylight climbed off.

"No one said so!" Icestar glared while Mossylight did a playful little jumpy-run away towards the river bank. Brighttail had caught her breath and sat looking amused at a warrior beating the RiverClan leader.

Icestar shook off and motioned to the river with her head. Brighttail nodded and they sat, a little ways off from each other, each with their eyes on the river. After a few minutes, Brighttail flashed out a paw and a fish flew into the air. When it landed on the solid earth, Brighttail gave it a swift bite, and it went limp. Icestar glanced at

the actions, nodded a congratulations, and went back to the river.

In not too much longer, Icestar had a fish, and decided to try the forest. Padding into the woods, she stopped and held still. Sniffing the air she thought she caught a scent. She followed it deeper into the forest, where it passed the camp and scurried into the less traveled back woods of RiverClan territory. When in a clearing, Icestar nearly lost it, for it seemed to disappear beneath a more powerful stench. That was when she realized what the stench was: *badger*. Sure enough, not more than a day ago, the badger that killed Willowshine had come back to catch prey, this time only a vole. Icestar froze, not sure whether to go on by herself or call a patrol to go check it out.

After a moment of practical thought, she decided to go back and tell her deputy and elder warriors about it. While walking back to the patrol, thoughts flew in her mind. What would she tell the general Clan? Or should she tell them anything? She might mention to keep an eye out. What if that caused panic? She put these to the back of her mind for a second, as she easily caught two mice.

When returning to the river where Brighttail and Mossylight still fished, she set down her catch.

"Should we head back? I have a good amount." Brighttail seemed to be getting slightly bored, and looked relieved at the offer.

"I'd say. I've got a couple fish, and haven't had any luck since them." Mossylight mewed as she padded over. Brighttail gave a "me too" to the conversation.

The cats had gathered their fresh kill and slowly started padding back to the camp. That was when they heard it. A painful yowl came from behind the rush walls of the camp. Icestar immediately thought of her encounter with the badger scent. Had it come back *already*? The young leader dropped her prey and looked at Mossylight. "I think it's bad luck for us to go on a hunting patrol together."

Mossylight nodded. Icestar quickly picked back up her fresh kill and raced towards the camp, patrol on her heels. Bursting through the

camp wall, nothing seemed out of the ordinary. A few warriors stood outside the nursery, including Grasspelt and Robinwing. When noticing his daughter, Robinwing hurried over to Icestar and the others. Icestar looked at him questioningly.

"Acornstream is giving birth to her litter! It just started, and Beechpaw is in with her now," he mewed.

Icestar sighed, but smiled. There was no emergency- she would get siblings! This was a time to celebrate! All too quickly she again thought of the badger. What would she tell the Clan? With new kits just being born, it might create chaos. She definitely should wait to tell the whole Clan, but also needed to tell Grasspelt soon. *Maybe not while we have such a happy event. Later.*

After a few minutes passed, Beechpaw came to get Acornstream's family. All the family had arrived home from patrols, so the four squeezed into the small space of the nursery. Acornstream, Beechpaw, and the kits being in there, the nursery seemed to be bursting at the seems.

All eyes gazed upon the kits- one tom, one she-cat. The tom bore a pale orange tabby coat on his back. Soft white fur lined his underbelly, feet, lower front face, and lower legs.

His sister squirmed. Acornstream nudged the she-cat a little, and the kit stopped struggling and settled down. She glowed a brilliant white with a few splotches of shades of darker brown. A spot had been place mischievously across the side of her mouth and cheek, as if she had just been playing in mud. Both deemed a lovable bundle of fluff.

"Well, name ideas, anyone?" Robinwing broke into the silence.

"The tom could be Dustkit," voiced Ashenfang.

"No, something more... special. Important," Acornstream replied.

This time Graybrook spoke. "Goldenkit? Honeykit?"

"I like Goldenkit," Robinwing agreed. When the other family members spoke their consent, it was settled. The tom would be

Goldenkit. Now for the she-cat.

"What about Hawkkit?" Robinwing suggested. When the others looked at him strangely, he discarded the idea.

"It sounds too... ferocious. She seems so small now. What about Harekit?" Acornstream mewed. This met some "ehs" and "I don't knows" from other cats. A moment of silence followed.

"Thawkit? Her pelt reminds me of when the ice on the river is just breaking up after leaf-bare. Mostly whitish ice is visible, but underneath is the brown river bottom," Icestar spoke. Slowly, heads started to nod and "yeahs" started to work their way around the assembled cats.

"Then it is decided. The newest members of the Clan: Goldenkit and Thawkit." Beechpaw smiled as she spoke.

Talk started among the cats as they made their way outside to let Acornstream and the kits visit with other Clan members and finally get some sleep. After finishing a conversation with her siblings about kithood memories, Icestar slipped away to find Grasspelt and finally talk to him. He emerged from visiting with Acornstream, and, seeing Icestar approaching, walked towards her.

"They are lovely. Acornstream said you came up with Thawkit? It's a great choice." Grasspelt smiled happily.

Icestar slightly blushed. "Well, yes, I guess I did. It really did fit." Grasspelt nodded in agreement. "But that is not what I wanted to talk to you about. This is a more... delicate matter."

Icestar beckoned to Grasspelt for him to follow her to her den. When inside, the leader sat down and motioned him to. A moment of silence enveloped them as Icestar fished for words. "When I was hunting earlier today, I decided to go into the darker woods in hopes for better prey. What I found was no where close to the prey itself." She related the story of the badger scent and thoughts.

Grasspelt's eyes widened as the story went on. "Wow. Do you really think it is the same one?"

Icestar nodded. "I don't see why another one would venture here. Well, who knows why the first one did anyways. Point being, the badger thinks he already had some success, so why should he give up the chance to get more easier food than what he already has?"

Grasspelt nodded this time. "So he is coming back to do exactly that: get more food. I'm glad you haven't told this to the Clan. That was a wise choice. We especially don't want anyone worrying about the new kits."

"I thought so. Now the question is: what are we going to do about it? We can't very well sneak off just us and defeat a badger. We would need Lionblaze's powers to do that," Icestar mewed, in thought of the ThunderClan warrior's super fighting powers used in the Great Battle.

"Let's just keep this in the back of out minds. Hopefully we can wait long enough for the kits to grow more able, so they can escape the nursery if need be. Then we can spring into action."

Chapter 13.

[image]

Hello, people of Wattpad! You might be thinking, *finally! Here she goes again, apologizing and talking about how she will try to update faster.* Ok, well, the truth is, I am going to do exactly that: sorry, but I'm hoping I can do more this summer! I didn't realize how much time a summer camp I am doing would take up. The other truth is that I'm lacking enthusiasm about continuing this story. I did receive some really positive feedback earlier when I was rereading it to refresh my mind about the going-ons, so that boosted my spirit. For now, I am going to try to finish it, and then write something else! Maybe my other idea for a fanfiction...

Three sunrises past. The whole of RiverClan slept well now, and worked on making its way to complete recovery. The walls looked as good as new, and only a few warriors still carried battle wounds, of which some might keep until they pass. Tonight would be the half moon, when all the medicine cats meet at the Moonpool to talk peacefully about Clan life and share tongues with StarClan.

Beechpaw mulled this over while sitting in the medicine den, half listening to one of Duskfur's stories of when she stayed in the medicine den. On a rare occasion, Duskfur slipped in a fact the apprentice didn't already know, but this was not one. This was one of those times when Beechpaw carried other things on her mind that sounded more interesting or important than hearing about when Willowshine mixed up a bowl of traveling serum.

The day had already gone on like this for a while. Now, the sun shone well over it peak, and Beechpaw thought she better get going before long, or else the other medicine cats might think she wasn't coming. "Then, Willowshine put in some - oh, what was it? - coltsfoot! She sprinkled a small leaf into the mix and stirred it about..."

Beechpaw smiled kindly at Duskfur. "Thanks for the information, Duskfur, but I should really get going to the Moonpool, or else I'll be late!"

"Great StarClan! Your right - it's getting late. You'd best be on your way or I'll be going on forever! Do you want me to come with you? You might need someone to guide-"

"No, no! I'll be fine. I've done it lots before. I'll go now. Bye!" Beechpaw hurried out of the medicine den before Duskfur could mew another word. She spotted her mother, Petalfur, lounging in the sun.

"Good luck, Beechpaw!" Petalfur called. "Will you be fine by yourself?"

Beechpaw sighed as she heard the question for the second time. "Yes, yes, I've done it plenty." Before anyone could say anything else, Beechpaw disappeared outside the camp entrance.

A lovely day shone upon Beechpaw. The river babbled swiftly and sunlight drifted between the new leaf buds. As she splashed across the river, a bird swooped down, and nearly sent her washing down the river. She quickly regained her balance, spat at the bird, and jumped the rest of the way across.

Beechpaw quickly jogged through the rest of RiverClan territory towards WindClan, and paused at the border. The warm sand felt good under her paws, as she continued along the lake. In the distance, she spotted a cat. After getting closer she recognized it as the WindClan medicine cat.

"Whiskerpelt!" Beechpaw called. The older cat turned, and Beechpaw bounded to catch up.

"Hello, Beechpaw! How are you doing? I hope RiverClan is well?" Whiskerpelt stopped and waited. Beechpaw padded up to his side and they continued together.

"We are fine. Everything is mostly back to normal. I've gotten some help with medicine skills from Duskfur, and it's going smoothly."

"Good, good. I'm so sorry about Willowshine. It was quite unfortunate. The battle wasn't really necessary, either." Soon they reached the creek that ran down from the Moonpool, and walked towards the source. They caught up to Antstep, the ShadowClan medicine cat, and nodded a greeting to each other.

Only after the threesome climbed up to the top of the small ditch where the Moonpool lay did they see the ThunderClan medicine cat, Seedlight, already sitting at the mirror-like water's edge. When she heard the others' paws, she turned around quickly, sat up, and licked her chest. The others shuffled down towards her.

"Hello Beechpaw, Antstep, Whiskerpelt. Shall we start?" Seedlight mewed.

"I guess," Beechpaw replied. Beechpaw frowned. Would she get to see Willowshine? What would StarClan see her as - a medicine cat or an apprentice? Despite her troublesome thoughts, she sat down at the edge of the Moonpool with the others, took a sip, and fell asleep.

She awoke lying in a small hollow, ringed by trees. A few pink and yellow flowers bloomed happily at her feet. Everything shone bright green. At the far side sat a cat. "Willowshine?" Beechpaw whispered.

"I am here, Beechpaw," came the answer.

"Willowshine!" Beechpaw leaped up to her old mentor. "I've missed you! How much I wish you were still back in RiverClan. I've gotten help with medicine cat duties, though, from Duskfur, but it's not the same. She is almost always telling me something I already know, or an old useless story."

Willowshine nuzzled her. "I miss you too. It is nice to see old friends who have passed on, though." She sighed. "But do you know what is going to happen today?"

Beechpaw tilted her head in confusion, then widen her eyes. "Are y-you going to...?"

Willowshine smiled and nodded. "Yes. You will get your medicine cat name." She then peered up at the ring of trees bordering the hollow. "You know, I know you're there. You can come out now," she mewed in a louder voice. One by one, three cats came out, all of them the medicine cats from the other Clans. The last one that appeared surprised Beechpaw - a light gray tabby she-cat. Icestar.

"Icestar? How did you get here? Why are you here?" Beechpaw questioned.

Icestar only shrugged. "I went to sleep last night and woke up here. I heard your conversation with Willowshine, though, and I think that is why." She nudged Beechpaw. "Go. We should start."

Beechpaw stepped over to Willowshine and sat. The other Clan cats gathered around the two. The young medicine cat kneaded the ground in anticipation. Willowshine looked up at the edges of the hollow, where many star-lit cats suddenly stood at the brim. "I, Willowshine, former medicine cat of RiverClan, call upon my warrior ancestors to look down on this apprentice. She has trained hard to understand the ways of a medicine cat, and with your help she will serve her Clan for many moons. Beechpaw, do you promise to uphold the ways of a medicine cat, to stand apart from rivalry between Clan and Clan, and to protect all cats equally, even at the cost of your life?"

Beechpaw quivered with excitement. This was finally it! She would be a real medicine cat. All the other cats smiled at her. "I do," she tried to talk normally, but it came out as a whisper.

"Then by the power of StarClan, I give you your true name as a medicine cat. Beechpaw, from this moment you will be known as Beechleaf. StarClan honors your skills and perseverance. By keeping going when you were alone you have proved to be a truly loyal Clan member." As a leader would do when giving an apprentice their warrior name, Willowshine set her muzzle of Beechleaf's head, and the new medicine cat liked her mentor's shoulder.

"Beechleaf! Beechleaf!" Seedlight cheered. The others soon joined in to celebrate the occasion. The other StarClan cats watching also joined in the chant. Beechleaf felt very happy for the first time it

what felt like a long time. She received many congratulations, some of which from cats she did not recognize. Before long, the StarClan cats started to fade away, and Beechleaf knew she would be back in the real world before long. Although, she felt fine with going back, as she was content.

When the Moonpool faded into view, Beechleaf stood and stretched. The others stirred around her, and slowly made their way up to the brim of the hollow. "Congratulations, Beechleaf," Whiskerpelt mewed when they reached the lake and split off from the others, skirting the edge towards RiverClan. "I haven't met nor heard of any other cat who had to go through StarClan to get their medicine cat name."

"Th- thank you?" Beechleaf wasn't quite sure whether the last part was a compliment or just a statement.

Whiskerpelt glanced down at Beechleaf and smiled, before setting his eyes back on the trail. "You're welcome." The two continued on in silence for a while before Whiskerpelt again spoke up. "Well, this is where we part ways. Goodbye, Beechleaf!" He trudged up a small hill heading towards the WindClan camp.

"Goodbye! May StarClan light your path!" Beechleaf called back. Before long, she reached the RiverClan boarder and entered the shade of trees, much to her contentment. The open fields of WindClan never seemed right to her.

She reached the river and almost stepped paw onto the first stepping stone, when, glancing down at the muddy bank, she spotted something that made her freeze. A paw print. Quickly, Beechleaf padded a little closer. A big paw print. Bigger than a cat's. She bent down to smell it and instantly was met with an atroucious, distinctive smell.

Badger.

Sooo, what did ya think? Mwahaha! Cliff hangar! I like to leave you guys with those. ^.^ It was kind of a long chapter. Surprise

that it was in Beechpaw- er, *leaf's* point of view! Also, thought I would give you a picture of her:

Cute, right?! I thought the swirly thing looked cool. The pattern was called something like a bull's eye. Also, I have an announcement for this book...

I'm gonna put it in the Wattys 2016! Ya, I know it's a very slim chance I'd win anything, but heck, why not? This is the third chapter I wrote in 2016 (impressive, huh? *rolls eyes*), so it is officially legitimate to enter. I might start another story that I want to put in the Wattys, too, that I had a really good idea for. Well, please help out by voting! Thanks!

-Emrysstar

Chapter 14.

Yay ! Another update. :) Your welcome. Think of it as my Christmas present to you guys . I just realized that I left you on a serious cliffhanger . Sorry! I'll continue a little more in Beechleaf's POV for some difference. I won't make this long. In fact, I'll end right now. Bye!

The scent smelled fresh, less than a sunrise old. Beechleaf knew her fear was true: the badger still roamed the Clans' territory. It was a live animal, needing food like any other, and would stop at nothing to get it. For all she knew, it could be a female with kits, which would later provide more deadly beasts. With RiverClan's own new kits, the clan would be worried.

She had to go tell Icestar right away. Yet, she didn't. *Maybe I should return with a little more information. Where has this badger been hiding?* She took a cautious step towards where more paw prints proceeded the first. Beechleaf followed them into the woods and along a thick bramble bush. She made a mental note not to run into that, if ever having to flee the badger.

Past the bush, a clearing opened up, strong with the smell of badger. About five fox-lengths wide, nothing but sparse grass covered the packed dirt. At the opposite side lay a small cave in the ground.

Beechleaf froze. It smelled distinctly of badger scent. *Was the badger home?* Pausing to listen, no sounds came to her pricked ears. She crept slowly, stealthily, forward, until the mouth of the small cave lay only a tail-length in front of her. *Should she go in?* Glancing around and pricking her ears one last time, she took a few more hesitant pawsteps forward, putting her just past the mouth.

Something that sounded like a rustling from inside the cave made the medicine cat jump. She didn't stay long to find out what it was.

Whirling around, Beechleaf made a mad dash for the exit. She ran outside and speeded across the clearing. Remembering the brambles from earlier, she swerved around them, just missing a thorn. No sounds of loud crashing, signifying the badger, followed her, but she kept running.

She raced across the steam, slipping once in her frenzy and splashing the cold water onto her fur. Grimmacing, the medicine cat kept running. Racing through the trees helped dry any wet fur. Slowing down when padding through the entrance, the camp looked normal, which brought a sigh of relief from her mouth. Cats lay sprawled around the edges; Goldenkit and Thawkit played a game of mossball; Acornstream sat with Duskfur and watched the kits. No sign of Icestar, though.

Beechleaf frowned and quickly half walked half ran to the warriors den. Inside, Icewing and Mallownose lay, sharing tongues. "Have you seen Icestar?"

The two warriors jumped. Mallownose quickly composed himself, and replied, "No, I haven't. Is everything okay?" he added, seeing Beechleaf's expression. She bit her lip, glanced outside worriedly, and turned back to them, hesitant to say something.

Icewing quickly stepped in. "I saw her earlier in her den." Beechleaf passed a smile and a relieved look, and started backing out of the warrior's den. Mallownose frowned and opened his mouth to say something, but Icewing silently set her tail on his back and gave him a look. He nodded and stayed quiet.

Beechleaf turned away from the den, and headed towards her leader's den, just as Icestar started out of it herself. "Icestar!" The leader turned and smiled.

"Beechpaw! Or should I say, *Beechleaf."* Icestar winked. "Anyhow, I'm glad you're back. How was the journey?"

Beechleaf managed a weak smile. "The journey up went fine. As you know, I had my naming ceremony. On the journey back though, I found something that you should know about." Beechleaf explained her experience of smelling badger and finding the cave.

"You were brave in venturing close to the cave. But I think it would've been a better idea to stay away and come for help first. Imagine if the badger had been there. We couldn't deal with loosing two medicine cats in such a short time," Icestar advised. Beechleaf nodded. She understood. There hadn't *really* been a need to go.

"For now, you should rest for a little while," continued Icestar. "Later, would you be willing to show me the cave?"

"Yes."

"Thank you! Have something to eat." Beechleaf nodded. She glanced hungrily at the fresh kill pile, grabbed a squirrel to chew on, and dragged it to the medicine den.

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While Beechleaf ate and slept, Icestar relayed the badger message to Grasspelt and her senior warriors- Icewing, Pebblefoot, Mallownose, and Robinwing. "By the way," the leader finished, "it's now *Beechleaf*." She smiled.

"I'd say we should just get this over with," Mallownose suggested after Icestar briefly explained the situation. "Should I go get Beechleaf?"

"Wouldn't it be wise to wait until tomorrow?" Pebblefoot interjected, glancing at the sun, which sat well past sunhigh. "Badgers are nocturnal creatures, and it would be less active in the morning, when it has just spent all night up."

"True." Icestar nodded. "Let's go first thing tomorrow morning." Mallownose frowned but agreed and everyone else just nodded.

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The next day before dawn, Beechleaf lead the way through the dew-filled marshy forest to the badger den, followed by Icestar, Flickerpaw, and Robinwing as the scouting troup. Rounding the bramble bush, they all spotted the large hole and stopped. Beechleaf quickly stepped aside and into the cover of undergrowth near the cave entrance. Icestar followed.

"Now what?" Beechleaf asked.

"Now," Icestar admitted, "I'm not completely sure. Let's just wait and see if anything happens." The leader and medicine cat sat back, while Robinwing slowly stalked up to the entrance of the cave. He sniffed about a bit, before hurrying over to the two.

"Scent is fresh. I'd say she came back home a little after moonhigh. She's out now. No cubs." He jumped into the shrubbery and settled next to Icestar, peering out at his apprentice, who stood opposite and facing the small hole, frowning.

They all stayed like that for several moments, when Icestar pricked her ears to here a faint ambling coming from her right. "Flickerpaw!" she hissed. He didn't hear her quiet voice. She tried again. "Flickerpaw! You need to get back..." her voice trailed off as the crashing grew to a noise easily heard by everyone, and Flickerpaw visibly froze in fear. When the badger broke through into the clearing, its small beady eyes immediately fixed on the apprentice and it growled menacingly. Flickerpaw only shrank back. Icestar leaped from her hiding place and bounded across the clearing, all but bowling into the brown and black tom. They rolled quickly away, until Icestar landed on top and glared at the could-have-been-former apprentice. She could feel him shaking against her paws.

He seemed to collect his breath, so Icestar stepped off him and faced the badger. It steadily approached them, a low growl resonating from its throat.

"Beechleaf! Go and get more strong cats for a battle. Run like your life depends on it!" Icestar commanded, "because it sort of does." She mumbled the last part to herself. When a scrambling came from the bushes, signifying Beechleaf's departure, the badger turned towards the sound. Icestar nimbly ran forward to nip its leg, hoping Beechleaf would be quick enough.

Chapter 15.

Icestar ducked swiftly under the large badger, away from Flickerpaw. Robinwing leaped out from the surrounding shrubbery to help join the fight. The chances didn't look good now, but Icestar told herself that Beechleaf would soon be back.

Flickerpaw stepped up nimbly behind the badger and took a swipe at it. The large beast hissed and swiped at Flickerpaw, but he was ready this time, and managed to jump out of the way before a large paw collided with his nose. Unscathed, the apprentice raced around to his mentor, where Icestar already stood.

"Think we can hold out long enough for Beechleaf?" Robinwing mewed to his companions.

"If we move tactically," Icestar responded as it approached them. "Let's form a triangle around the badger and take turns striking it." Robinwing and her ran a fox-length away from the meeting spot, together surrounding the larger animal. The three took turns swiping out at the badger. If it singled in on one of them, the other two would attack from behind. This series of movements kept the badger occupied. Icestar took her fourth turn, and the badger turned on her. It started to advance, so Robinwing scratched it from behind. But the badger ignored the warrior and kept its pace towards Icestar. Soon, her fur bumped the cool dirt of the mound where the cave entrance lay. She shot a panicked look towards her father, and he reflected it back, still clawing the enemy to make it turn away. The leader knew this couldn't end well. She glanced around, but any escape path would bring her in range of the badger's deadly claws. The beast took another step closer and a swipe of it's huge paw-

Suddenly, something knocked the badger's head aside and a series of loud yowls broke loose. More cats poured into the clearing and the large black animal staggered to the side from the weight of about four or five cats attacking. Icestar took the opportunity to scramble away from the wall and nip at the badger's hind leg.

The young leader could now take the time to observe that the cat who had attacked the badger's head was Grasspelt. Grasspelt, her deputy, putting his life out there for her. Of course, it was the loyal thing to do for the leader, but imagine if his aim was a little off and he missed. They could've both died, which would be a big blow to the Clan, especially after loosing both their medicine cat and former leader not long before. But he did it anyways. Icestar realized that she had made a good decision in choosing her deputy. She had chosen someone who was truly loyal to the Clan, who would put the leader's life before his.

Although, what was the true reason for his loyalty? Could it just have been devotion and honor? Or something deeper? Something more... personal? Icestar felt a sudden jolt, a sudden *connection* with him. She had never felt quiet the same about another cat. It was emotional. What was it? Was it... no, really? She was the leader! Was that even allowed? She shook her head. Besides, she had a battle to fight right now!

The badger shook Grasspelt off its head, and he landed on the ground with a thud. *If there is any connection between you two,* Icestar thought, *then use it to save him!* The silver she-cat raced to his body and struck out with a paw before the badger could make its next move, making it turn away.

"Thank you," Grasspelt gasped as he caught his breath. He heaved himself up into a stance he could move quickly from if needed.

"You did the same for me. It- It was only fair," Icestar replied. She gazed at him, and he returned it. They shared a grim-yet-pleasant look. The two broke the stare at the same time. Icestar snuck a look back, but Grasspelt had already turned away.

The leader sighed and turned back towards the battle, where RiverClan were repeatedly attacking the badger. Icestar jumped at its back, clawed, hung on for a few seconds, and leaped off. A giant, oblivious hind paw almost crushed the tip of her tail before she tucked it next to her and sped out of harm's way, nearly ramming into Pebblefoot.

Eventually, the badger shook like a dog, sending all remaining cats

flying to the ground, and ran off in the opposite direction of the lake. At the last second, Toadstrike had latched onto the badger's back and now held on for dear life as the large creature blundered away, slightly like a Twoleg on a bucking horse. A few cats chased after him, while the rest collapsed to the ground. Beechleaf padded out from her cover of behind some brambles and started checking for injuries. She sent Cedarbrook back to Camp to retrieve some herbs, who had learned some medicine cat skills from a stay in the den when she had sprained a paw. Cats started back to Camp, less hurt ones helping ones with more injuries stumble along. Icestar supported a limping Ashenfang.

"So, you've started thinking about it?" Ashenfang suddenly asked.

Icestar glanced at her sister, confused but slightly apprehensive. "What? Started thinking about what?"

"Y'know, a mate."

Icestar instinctively turned red under her fur and thought of a certain tom, but didn't show it. "Well, um, no, I mean, maybe, a *littl*e, but-"

Ashenfang amusedly smiled. "I think you have. I saw you talking to Grasspelt. Right there, in the middle of the battle. Cats are *fightin*g, and you're awkwardly stuttering to your deputy."

Icestar sighed. "Okay, fine. Do you think I should go for him? Is it even allowed for leaders to have a mate?"

Ashenfang displayed a thoughtful gaze as she splashed through the river. "You should if it is. Grasspelt's a good cat. You *did* choose him to be your deputy. I *think* it's allowed. I've never heard anything strictly against it, unlike with medicine cats." *Who seem to do it anyways,* Icestar thought. *Is it just the same with leaders?*

"But you've heard the stories about Bluestar, right?" Ashenfang continued, "who had to give up her kits to become the deputy of ThunderClan? And she took them here to RiverClan?"

"Yes, I have." Icestar sighed again. "Will that end up being me? Can

they demote me for having kits? But who's 'they?' I'd already have the leader and deputy on my side! What about Beechleaf? Or can the Clan displace me for not being a rightful leader? Ugh! I have too many questions!" She trailed off as they reached the camp.

Ashenfang nuzzled her sister comfortingly as she stopped leaning on Icestar and lay down in the medicine den. "Ask the elders, they'd probably know best. Although go for Graymist. She's often less grouchy than Mintfur." Ashenfang smiled mischievously. "But do it tomorrow. We *both* need some rest, not just me."

Icestar nodded thoughtfully and padded out with her head down, successfully bumping Grasspelt himself as he helped Pebblefoot into the medicine den. The leader certainly heard a chuckle from behind her, and glared back at her sister, who was holding in a heartier laugh. She mumbled a quick apology and hurried to settle in her den, where her thoughts could temporarily be put to rest.

Good chapter ? Maybe ? Yes ?

Does anybody ship it yet ? Please ?! Grassstar anyone ? Or maybe that's too many " s ." XD Icepelt ?

Also , I totally forgot Icestar had a sister until this chap . XD Only until I saw Ashenfang's name in the allegiances did it register .

Okay , I'm sorry for the partial fourth wall break about medicine cats near the end of the chapter . XD I just had to put it in there . Does anybody know the rules about leaders and mates , though ? Please comment if you do !! It'd be a big help !!! Thanks for reading ! Vote , comment , share , and eat cupcakes !!!!

- Emrysstar

Chapter 16.

"Let all cats old enough to catch their own prey gather beneath Highlog for a Clan meeting!"

Icestar's voice cut into the air. It was the morning after the badger fight. A clear day had arrived to the cats of RiverClan. They stalked out of their dens, stretching and yawning, to see what their leader had to say. Some had been part of the battle, and they carried injuries out to the clearing. Pebblefoot and Ashenfang needed to be helped out by Beechleaf.

Icestar surveyed the Clan. Most warriors appeared to be starting to heal nicely. The ones who didn't go into battle were helping the others with food and sharing tongues. "Some of you were with me last night as we fought the badger that has been stealing our food. Some of you have been told about it. I am here to confirm what you have heard- we won!"

A yowling cheer rose from the cats as they stood in celebration. They had beat a badger! Icestar waited for the clan to quiet down before continuing. "Thank you to our warriors who helped in this fight, and to Beechleaf for healing the Clan after we returned home *and* for finding the nest."

The medicine cat smiled and nodded in appreciation at Icestar. "Thank you to you, too! You are the one who lead us through this."

Icestar returned the gesture. "The next gathering is in a half moon. We will have good news to share and be a healthy clan again!" Another cheer sounded from the gathered cats. "Let's take it easy and be grateful for the coming of newleaf! The meeting is over." Icestar leaped down from Highlog.

The rest of the day went by peacefully, along with the next few. Cats healed and the clan noticed a gradual growing of prey. Everything seemed quiet and uneventful, for once. Several sunhighs after the battle, Icestar padded over to the medicine den to check

on Ashenfang. Icestar poked her head through the curtain of rushes to see her sister sitting in a nest, bathing. She looked up between licks and smiled.

"Hey, how you doing?" Icestar asked.

Ashenfang glanced at her leg. "Oh, I'm alright. I can't do much walking yet, but Beechleaf says to give it several sunhighs before walking normally, and a few more after that before hunting. I'll be good as new by then!" She shrugged, and Icestar nodded understandingly.

After a moment of peaceful silence, Ashenfang asked, "What about you? Did you go to the elders yet?"

Icestar blushed, having almost totally forgotten about their conversation the day of the battle. She hesitated, before replying, "No, I haven't. I didn't-"

"Well? Are you going to?"

"I guess," Icestar mewed stallingly. "I wanted to check on you, and didn't want to bother them now-"

"Ice-staar!" Ashenfang drew it out teasingly, "Come on, let me go with you! I bet they'll be happy to hear about young love!" The black she-cat stood up, despite Icestar's protests of making her rest, and hopped out of the den. All the leader could do was support her sister as she hobbled across the clearing. When they reached the elders' den, Ashenfang squeezed in first, nearly bumping into Mintfur, who was on his way out. He glanced at the black cat dissapprovingly, and padded out.

Graymist looked up at them, just having woke up from a nap. "Hello, you two! And what can I do for you?"

"Well, um-" Icestar began but was quickly cut off by Ashenfang.

"Icestar has had her eye on someone! She was thinking about... well, you know, *loooove*," Ashenfang mewed excitedly, drawing out the "o" in "love" to make it sound more like "luuve."

"Oh! This is a pleasant surprise!" Graymist smiled kindly. "Shall I guess?" Ashenfang glanced to Icestar, who merely shrugged awkwardly. "Ok, Hollowfern?"

Icestar shook her head.

"Rushrunner?"

Again, Icestar shook her head.

"No? What about Grasspelt?"

When Icestar tried to hide her smile and bit her lip, Graymist exclaimed, "Aha! I got it." Graymist pondered this information over a bit. "Grasspelt, a good choice. The other two are a little young yet. Did you know when you chose him to be your deputy?" At a "no" from Icestar, Graymist continued. "That is good. Never choose out of your own interests. Although, I'm assuming you didn't come only to talk about your love interests?"

Icestar responded, "No, I have some questions about this. Since I'm the leader, *am* I allowed to have a mate?"

"Yes you are. You can have a mate and keep your position as leader," Graymist answered confirmingly.

"Am I allowed to have kits?" Icestar asked.

Graymist sighed. "No, I'm afraid not. You couldn't take care of them and be able to handle all the responsibilities of the leader at the same time. You couldn't fight for the Clan or go on long journies. The only other option for that would be to temporarily resign and let Grasspelt be the leader. Then you would go live in the nursery as 'Icestar' until the kits are apprentices, and resume leadership afterwards. Grasspelt wouldn't be able to do the leadership ceremony since you are still alive, so he would stay 'Grasspelt' and not have nine lives."

Icestar nodded, soaking in this information. "So I could be a leader without kits or a temporary queen who later comes back to leader." She met eyes with Graymist, who nodded. "What about the deputy? We would need a temporary one."

"That would be for Grasspelt to decide. He would choose a temporary deputy as if the past leader had died and he were the new one."

"Ok. Thank you," Icestar mewed.

Graymist dipped her head in acknowledgement. After a few moments in silence, she asked, "Well, have you told him how you feel?"

Icestar shook her head and said "no."

"You should. It would be a waste after all we've talked about," the elder mewed. "Anyways, I wish you good luck. Its always nice to see something like this."

Icestar dipped her head to Graymist. "Thank you," she mumbled, and slipped out of the den, Ashenfang close behind.

"So? You ready?" Ashenfang insisted.

"Hold on!" Icestar laughed. "I will, just give me some time." Ashenfang pouted but returned to her nest without much more teasing.

After Icestar padded out of the nest, she glanced around the clearing. Her eyes lingered where Grasspelt sat talking to his sister Petalfur in front of the warriors den, before moving on to her mother, who also stood surveying the camp.

Acornstream met eyes with her daughter and hurried over to her. "Have you seen Goldenkit?" the queen panted, the sudden movement exhausting her because of the recent pregnancy. "I swear he was just in the nursery and then he wasn't there!"

Icestar held her gaze with concern and replied, "No, I haven't! Let's search shall we?"

"What's going on?" a male voice broke in. The two she-cats turned to see Grasspelt and Petalfur padding over to them, who apparently had noticed the commotion.

Acornstream immediately jumped on the opportunity for more help, while Icestar let her mother do the talking. "I can't find Goldenkit! We must find him!" she wailed.

"Shhh, its okay," mewed Petalfur as she rubbed against Acornstream comfortingly. "What about Thawkit? Is she alright?"

The queen sniffed and nodded. "She's with Duskfur in the nursery."

"Okay, let's start searching. Come with me and..." Petalfur mewed soothing words and lead Acornstream away, meanwhile glancing behind herself at the other two, giving them a look that seemed to mean "Find that kit!" Grasspelt and Icestar glanced at each other, now mostly alone.

"Let's start looking, I guess," Icestar proposed. "I'll go check by the nursery and you... if you could check... um, somewhere?" Icestar half-smiled awkwardly.

Grasspelt smiled too. "Sure. I'll check the nests closest to the nursery, like the warriors den."

"Uh, yeah, that sounds good!" Icestar agreed. Grasspelt laughed, and they split up.

Icestar scuttled over to the nursery, quickly scanning the front. No loose kits. She made her way around the left to the back and started sniffing and prodding about. Goldenkit was not to be found.

Just then Icestar heard a tiny mew. *Goldenkit?* She glanced up and spotted a tiny tuft of golden fur. He appeared to be stuck rather in the middle of the section where the camp wall meets the back of the nursery. Icestar sighed. Shs stepped carefully between the two walls of dried reeds and other vegetation, trying not to break anything.

Two more steps and she'd be there. One. *Step. Crack.* The sound of a stick breaking somewhere under her paw made her wince slightly. Two. *Step. Crack. Wince.* Successfully, she lifted up Goldenkit in her jaws by the scruff of his neck, emitting a squeak from the little ball of fluff.

The leader stepped backwards carefully until she reached a wider part and padded more quickly. She felt her self bump into something, and heard a muffled cry from behind her. Icestar tried to glance backwards, but with the kit in her mouth, the area was a little too narrow.

She was about to set the kit down, when a voice behind her said, "You can come back now." Stepping back more hesitantly, she came to a wider spot and turned around. Before her now stood Grasspelt. "You found him! I couldn't so I was going to check on you." Icestar nodded slowly, trying not to shake Goldenkit too much. She made a move to take another step forward, but Grasspelt happened to be blocking her way. He got the message, and stepped aside. "Right, we should give him to Acornstream. I think her and Petalfur are in the apprentices den."

He lead the way around the camp, and squeezed through the entrance of the apprentices den. "Acornstream! Look who Icestar found."

Acornstream looked towards her daughter excitedly and squealed with joy at the sight of Goldenkit. "Oh, thank you, thank you! Where was he?"

"Behind the nursery," Icestar answered, spitting golden fur from her mouth. "He must have squeezed through the wall of the nursery somewhere and gotten stuck. We should find and patch that hole up."

"I can do that if you want, Icestar!" a small voice said. Flickerpaw happened to be sitting in the apprentices den, apparently listening in on the conversation.

Flickerpaw did not appear to be busy at the moment so Icestar replied, "Yes, thank you. That would be very helpful! Why don't you go with Acornstream to find it?" After the Queen and apprentice went back to the nursery, the remaining three cats stepped outside.

"Good find, Icestar. I was hoping for Acornstream's sake that Goldenkit didn't go far, and it seems like he didn't travel more than a few tail-lengths!" Petalfur commented.

"Thank you! Just trying to help," Icestar accepted the compliment.

"And you did a good job of it," Grasspelt added, nodding, receiving a nod back from Icestar. The three cats remained in silence for a minute before Grasspelt spoke again. "Well, I should probably go ahead and send out a sun-high patrol. See you later!" He padded away, glancing back once. Icestar followed him with her eyes.

"You should tell him," Petalfur suddenly said.

Feeling taken aback, Icestar turned her head to the other cat. "What?"

Petalfur glanced at her brother and back to Icestar. "I know about you two. Trust me, he's told me he feels the same way. He's just worried about saying so." Then Petalfur walked away to volunteer for a patrol. When she mewed something quietly to Grasspelt, he looked towards her, surprised. His head swiveled to Icestar, and quickly ducked back to the cats gathering for patrols.

Baffled, Icestar sat in the middle of the camp for a while, until the clearing emptied out. She shook her head as she entered the leader's den. Sitting down and licking her paw, she pondered what Petalfur had just said, and what Graymist had told her earlier. The two cats seemed to be saying the same thing. Icestar shook her head to clear it. Taking a bath seemed to calm troubled thoughts.

Icestar let her mind wander to the coming times. Who knows what they'd bring? In a little less than a half moon, there would be another Gathering. She probably should make the big decision before then. If she does, should she make an announcement? Probably not, unless she is going to temporarily resign. The young leader sighed, not wanting to worry herself too much. She set her head down to rest and take a peaceful nap. Whatever was going to happen was going to happen, and she was going to have to live with it.

Yaaaay ! Another long overdue chapter ! XD I'm sorry again . Shout out to BooksforLifeRp **for spurring me into action with**

your post on my message board . XD Thanks! I was hoping to do at least one chapter over Spring Break. Maybe two .

But guess what ? If I do two , then I'll have finished the book ! Yes , friends , I am almost done with my first official book-sized story ! I'm thinking about making an epilogue but it's not for sure . Stay tuned for the next update !

-Emrysstar✧

Chapter 17.

The next Gathering eventually came on a cool newleaf day. That sundown, RiverClan prepared to send their cats. Several warriors collected in the center of the camp around Icestar and Grasspelt. The two stood, slightly awkwardly, discussing who should come.

Icestar shifted on her paws as she spoke. "How about Hollowfern, Troutjump, and Mossylight? I don't believe they were at the last Gathering."

"I don't think so either," Grasspelt agreed. "Of course, we must have Beechleaf. What if we took Pebblefoot and Icewing, too? We need some senior warriors..."

Ashenfang butted in. "Can I come? My leg feels practically normal!"

Icestar hesitated, giving Grasspelt a chance to mew, "I don't see why not. You seem to be walking just about normally!" At Icestar's worried look, he whispered, "She'll be fine. I'll make sure someone watches her when she goes over the log."

Icestar nodded in appreciation. "You can take Petalfur," Icestar suggested, trying to return the kind gesture.

The deputy's face lit up. "Yes, thank you, she'd like that!"

After telling the gathered cats, Icestar and Grasspelt hurried out of camp, followed by Beechleaf, Pebblefoot, Petalfur, Ashenfang, Icewing, Hollowfern, Troutjump and Mossylight. The Clan padded swiftly through their lightly-forested territory and waded through the river. The group soon reached the log bridge to the Gathering Island. Icestar stayed back to make sure everyone else got across safely and noticed that Grasspelt did too. He appeared nervous, like he wanted to say something, but didn't know how or when.

Eventually, all the RiverClan cats made it across, except for her and Grasspelt. At his hesitance, she prepared to jump onto the log. Just

as she sprang upwards, he called out, "Wait! Icestar!" Surprised, the leader jerked in midair, trying to stop herself. Scrambling, she slipped back down the side of the log and would've fallen in the lake, had Grasspelt not been there to catch her.

Icestar breathed heavily at the sudden excitement, but soon laughed. "Grasspelt! Stop me *before* I begin to jump if you want to tell me something, not during!" She shook her head in amusement. "But what is it?"

Grasspelt chuckled, then grew back the nervous expression the had carried earlier. Icestar felt her stomach jump in anticipation. He fumbled with his words. "I- Icestar... what- er, how..." Eventually he sighed before blurting, "How do you see me?"

Icestar gazed at him, somewhat speechless. Suddenly, she remembered her goal of talking to him about what *might* be coming up now. The other part of that goal, which she was about to fail at if not done very soon, was to do it before tonight's Gathering. For now, the young leader wasn't quite sure what to say. She started carefully. "I... see you as my deputy. A very... helpful and resourceful deputy, and I have no doubt that I made the right choice when choosing you."

Grasspelt's shoulders tensed as he listened to her speak. "But, just as a deputy?"

"Well, of course, not just a *deputy*," her words ran ahead of her thoughts. "I think your a very loyal and caring cat. You very compassionate and fun and attra-" Icestar cut off, her brain having caught up to what her mouth was saying.

Grasspelt smiled awkwardly. "I- I believe there is something going on here," he mewed, glancing between himself and Icestar.

Icestar sighed, her worries finally off her shoulders, and smiled back sheepishly. "I believe so."

"Would- would you like to try... this... for a little while? See how things go?" Grasspelt asked tentatively, warming up to the situation.

Icestar hesitated for only a moment before replying, "Yes. Yes I would." She gave him a lick on the ear. Grasspelt stiffened on instinct, but quickly relaxed again into her fur, which felt soft against his side. Gazing at each other, the new couple stood silently. They broke the gaze at the same time when the padding of another Clan approached their ears. Icestar glanced at the log and back at Grasspelt questioningly, checking if it was ok to move on. He chuckled before flicking his tail to signal her to continue. The leader jumped up gracefully, her deputy right behind her.

When she reached the clearing, Icestar spotted Ashenfang sitting near the Great Oak and glancing around. She caught her sister's eye, smiled, and nodded. At Ashenfang's confused look, the leader flicked her tail behind her, where Grasspelt emerged from the shrubbery. Immediately catching on, the black cat raced over to the two of them and began talking very excitedly about their lives together. Icestar and Grasspelt only shared an amused look.

Shortly after, all the Clans settled onto the island, and the leaders took their positions on the Great Oak. Whitestar, the leader of ThunderClan, started the Gathering. "Cats of all Clans, welcome! We are entering newleaf, and happy for the change in weather. If no other Clan wishes to object, I can start with sharing the news of ThunderClan." Icestar, Tawnystar, and Emberstar all nodded their approval. "We are healthy and finding a sufficient amount of prey to keep our Clan running smoothly. We do have three new kits- Amberkit, Mistkit, and Maplekit- who are children of Cinderheart and Lionblaze." At this, a golden tabby tom sat up straighter as he was congratulated by fellow ThunderClan members along with a few other cats.

Whitestar stepped back on her branch to let Tawnystar speak next. She reported a healthy Clan and an extra supply of goldenrod that other Clans would be welcome to use if they need. "Please ask us first, as we would appreciate to welcome you as guests, not intruders," she finished.

Emberstar stepped up next to report the apprenticeship of Robinpaw and Greypaw. He looked about ready to burst with pride as he smiled at his kits who sat with their new mentors, Breezepelt and Swallowtail. "Sadly, we did have the death of our elder,

Owlwhisker, from old age. May he live peacefully with StarClan." The WindClan leader bowed his head in sorrow while others mourned with him.

Emberstar glanced over at Icestar and nodded slightly to signify that it was her turn. She stepped forward and glanced around the crowd, her eyes settling on Grasspelt's. He grinned at her from the base of the Great Oak, and she smiled back before speaking. "We have experienced many good events in RiverClan! First, we successfully drove away the badger from all Clan territories. It should not return.

"Also, our medicine cat apprentice, Beechpaw, has now become a full medicine cat with her new name- Beechleaf!" Beechleaf blushed and shrank down shyly as RiverClan chanted her name. "Our last piece of good news is the kits of Acornstream and Robinwing being born- Goldenkit and Thawkit!" Icestar met eyes with her father and they shared a smile. The RiverClan leader glanced at Whitestar and nodded to signify that she was done.

"Thank you, Icestar. It sounds like mostly good news from all the Clans! If nothing else needs to be said, the Gathering can be over." When none of the other leaders spoke up, she announced, "Alright, the Gathering is over! May StarClan light your path!" She dropped down from the Great Oak, followed by the other leaders.

As soon as Icestar reached the ground, Grasspelt padded up to her and flicked her tail with his. They started walking towards the wall of bushes around the Gathering clearing, followed by the rest of RiverClan. "Hey! Nice job. You made us sound like a much healthier Clan than last moon."

Icestar laughed. "That's because we are! I was just telling the truth. We've worked hard over this moon, and the Clan is back to a normal, good life because of it."

"A lot of thanks to our wonderful leader." Grasspelt nodded at her with a smile.

"And to the deputy!" Icestar replied. "Come on, you've done so much!"

"All of which couldn't have been done without you," He mewed with a sincere look.

"Ha! You could've managed it."

"But if you weren't the leader, I might have never been made deputy."

Icestar chuckled. "Touché." It felt so good to be able to be relaxed around him, she thought. Their tails intertwined, the deputy and leader slipped between the budding bushes, leading the way back to their RiverClan home.

Hello , readers ! As you know , this was the LAST CHAPTER of Left Flailing ! I hope you have enjoyed this story ! Many thanks to those who have been when me from beginning to end in my adventure of writing this book . These people have stuck with me through my EXTREMELY slow updates and rough drafts where they catch my mistakes! XD Please comment here if you are one of these people. Adding onto their misery , I actually finished this chapter a couple days ago but never got around to actually publishing it until now XD Sorry !!! :3

Also thanks to my newer readers for keeping me going ! This probably wouldn't have been finished as soon as now without you . Thank you to anyone who comes after this is done , too . You guys don't have to wait for me to update . XD

This is also my first full-length Wattpad book to finish , which feels really good ! It's also my first full-length book I've finished in my entire life ! Yaaaaaayy !!!

Although this is the last chapter , keep a lookout for one more ! I've been thinking about while I am editing early chapters , to go back and add something to the very beginning . I believe someone commented that it was a little quick for Minnowstar's death to happen. I'll probably add a chapter so you get to know her a little better before I kill her off . XD

Alright , that's it ! Thank you SO MUCH for reading all of this ! I'll quit ranting now about this book . Vote , comment , share aaaaand eat cupcakes !! (Though I forgot about that, didn't you ? Nope !) Byyyee !!!!

- Carina ✧